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THROUGH HIDDEN SHENSI

BY

FRANCIS H. NICHOLS

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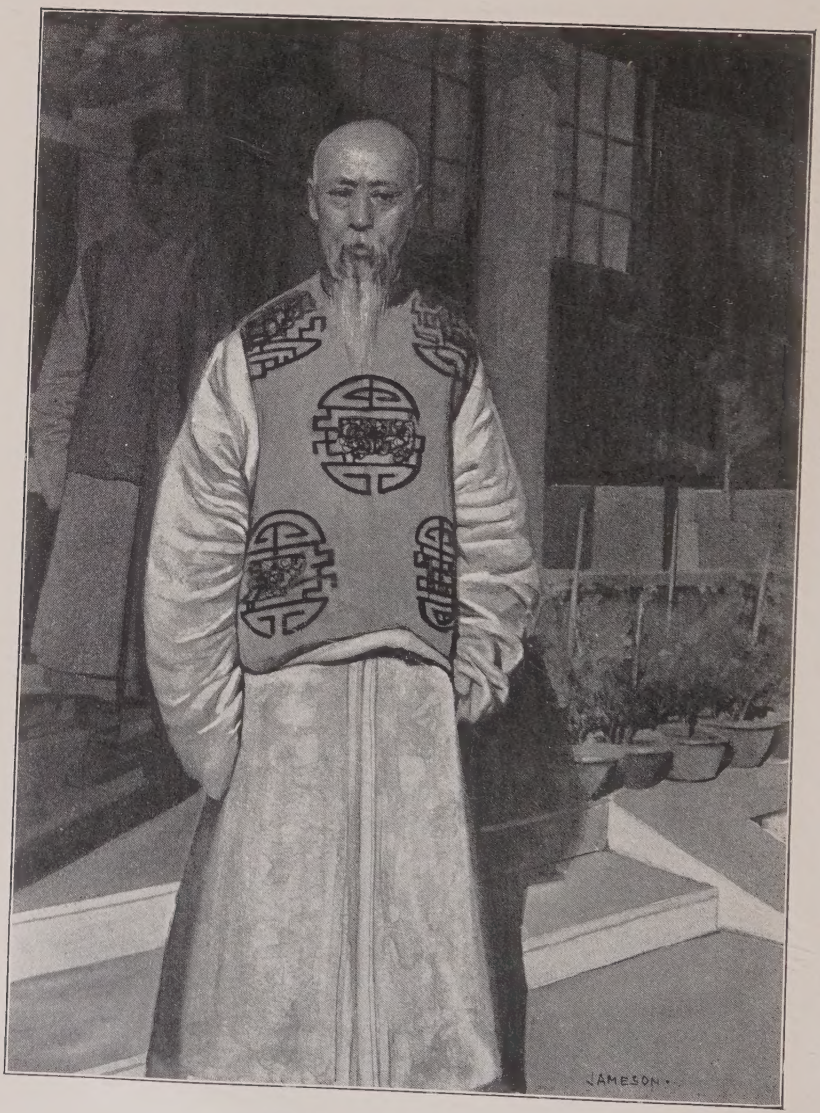

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THROUGH HIDDEN SHENSI

BY

FRANCIS H. NICHOLS

ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS
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TROW DIRECTORY
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY
NEW YORK

To

MY MOTHER

M. G. M.

I DEDICATE WHATEVER
MAY BE GOOD IN
THIS BOOK

PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION

LATE in December, 1904, word was received through the State Department at Washington of the death, from pneumonia, at Gyangtse, in Southern Tibet, of Francis Henry Nichols, the author of "Through Hidden Shensi." More than a year and a half ago Nichols had left New York with the plan of penetrating Tibet to Lhassa, then still the mysterious and unvisited city. In the interval Colonel Younghusband's expedition had forestalled his project; but he had persevered in his intention, changing his route so as to enter Tibet from India, and had been at Gyangtse, a little more than a hundred miles from Lhassa, for a week or two when he was attacked by the illness which caused his death.

Nichols was thirty-six years old, and had had already an experience which fitted him for his last undertaking. He had been a correspondent in Cuba during the Spanish War, the news of the declaration of which he was first to carry to General Gomez in an adventurous expedition; and later (in 1901) he was sent to China as correspondent of *The Christian Herald*, in charge of its relief for sufferers by

famine in the little-visited province of Shensi. This journey was the origin of this book, which appeared in the autumn of 1902, and the continued public interest in which has called forth this new edition.

China and Tibet became after this the objects of his chief interest; and the belief gained upon him that he could succeed in the often-attempted journey to Lhassa. He approached the plan with much intelligence, and succeeded in gaining for it the confidence of the Geographical Society, and of the publishers of his book. Aided by both, and by some others, he went to Pekin early in 1903, and there secured the interest of Sir Robert Hart and others in his scheme, and to a remarkable degree the favor of Chinese officials, especially of Prince Ching.

Nichols crossed western China without mishap, and spent some time at Ta Chien Lo, near the Szechuen frontier of Tibet, in studying Tibetan and otherwise fitting himself for his further journey. He crossed into Tibet at the end of the year; a letter from him at Batang, the last Chinese stopping-place, being dated December 24, 1903. Until the news of Younghusband's expedition penetrated to his neighborhood he spent the time with varying fortune in eastern Tibet; but the turmoil aroused by the rumors of the English invasion made it evident even to his persistent will that he must adopt some other method of approach. He went south through Yunnan to

Burma, and made a fresh start from Mandalay, again reaching the Tibetan frontier about November 1st. He experienced some trouble there from the British-Indian authorities, who were at first unwilling that he should go on;. but this was overcome, and by December 8th he was at Gyangtse, only a comparatively short distance from his goal, where he was overtaken by an illness that proved fatal.

Mr. Nichols had not only a rare talent and temperament for the work he had set himself, but a breadth of view and humane ideals which were very noticeable. He had a sincere sympathy with the people whose life he studied, and that capacity for successful communication with Eastern races of which the value may be judged by its rarity. He seems to have shown discretion as unvarying as his persistence, and from his letters and papers which have reached home it is evident that he made friends under the most unexpected and adverse conditions.

The extent and value of the scientific and literary material he has left behind him are not yet known, though it is hoped that his diaries and papers have all been preserved. His friends have the satisfaction of knowing that during his illness he received the most faithful care from the surgeon of the English camp near which he was, and that he had the companionship of friends whom he had made among the officers.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

SHENSI is a naturally gray land of dim beginnings. Most of it is in the plain of Northern Asia. Mountains, well-nigh impenetrable, separate Shensi from the valleys of the South. It is a land that has lingered far from world highways. On the plain and in the mountains live a people who have always been as they are now; who are so continuously old that on first acquaintance they appear dull from sheer lack of any trace of racial youthfulness.

But sifted into the substratum of their character are grains of gold which have been brought down on the stream of time from prehistoric sources, and which gleam with an added lustre because of the common clay in which they are imbedded.

I had all the prejudices of the foreigner when I first crossed the gray plain and met the old race. They seemed then only a perpetuation of the commonplace; but as I went in and out among them they began to interest me. I found that they had

achieved much, but were free from boasting; that they loved their own kind of learning; that their pride was tempered by reason and by the isolated experience of their country; that they strove to do right as they saw the right; that they did not covet, and that because they had always honoured their fathers and their mothers their days had been longer in their land than had been the days of any other race on earth. I came to respect their eternity and to admire their love of their parents, their ancestors, and their past.

The practical character of the work I had to do left little room for the play of my prejudices. I was denied the privilege of foreign condescension. I could not remain on a height contemplating the people below me. I was compelled to meet them on their own ancient plain. As a result I came to see things in some measure through their eyes and to accept their point of view.

I appreciated the seeming absurdity of a modern's attempt to pass the torch of an imported civilisation to a land where its own had always burned. I began to look upon Homeric literature as recent, and to regard as experimental a theory of government that began only with Magna Charta.

I have never been able to depart wholly from this Shensi point of view. It may have found unconscious expression in the following account of

my travels, and in some descriptions of men and things. For the fault of the absence from these pages of both a militant and a missionary spirit, let me urge in extenuation that this narrative offers no solutions of Chinese problems, points no morals, and draws no conclusions. It is an attempt at a picture of Oldest China and its people as I saw them in their land—sowing, reaping, toiling, thinking, and misjudging the world beyond their mountains as persistently as that world misjudges them.

A WORD about the illustrations in this book. The pictures of scenes in Sian were taken for me by a native photographer in that city. From him also I purchased the photograph of the temple at Hua ih and the portraits of Rung Lu and the Governor of Shensi.

"The Mountain Chair; the Opium Refuge," and "The Opium Beggar" were given to me by Dr. Edwards of Shansi, whose guest I was in Tai Yuan.

The photograph of the "Gorge of the Wei Ho" was taken for Mr. Duncan as a preliminary exhibit to the provincial government of Shensi of his plan for the irrigation of the Plain of Sian.

For the pictures of Han River boats I am indebted to Rev. Mr. Harquist of Shensi, who

kindly obtained them for me from a missionary in Fan Ching.

All the rest of the illustrations are the result of a Chinese sun upon the author's own camera films. An especial interest attaches to the frontispiece portrait of Prince Ching, from His Highness's declaration to me that it was the only photograph of him ever taken.

I WISH to make grateful acknowledgment:—

To my friend, Dr. Louis Klopsch, proprietor of *The Christian Herald*, for his permission to reproduce in this volume photographs taken while representing him in Shensi.

To Dr. W. A. P. Martin, author of "The Lore of Cathay," for his great kindness in translating for me the inscriptions of Shensi tablets that are reproduced in these pages.

To Wang, to missionaries, to mandarins, and to others who helped me on my way.

NEW YORK, August, 1902.

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At End of Volume

Map — Route of the Author's Journey Through Hidden Shensi and Other Parts of China.

THROUGH HIDDEN SHENSI

"When I had just quitted my native country and crossed the Chinese wall, I fancied every deviation from the customs and manners of China was a departing from nature. . . . But I soon perceived that the ridicule lay not in them, but in me; that I falsely condemned others for absurdity, because they happened to differ from a standard originally founded in prejudice or partiality."

—"Lien Chi Altangi—Citizen of the World."

THROUGH HIDDEN SHENSI

CHAPTER I

STARTING

IN the northwest corner of China is a province called Shensi. Its area is greater than that of England and Scotland combined. Its population is nearly eight millions. It is old and isolated; so old that no one in China knows the story of its beginnings, and so isolated that the Pekinese speak of it as though it were a foreign country.

Sian, the capital of Shensi, was selected as a city of refuge for the Empress-dowager Tsz Hi and Emperor Kwang Su during their enforced exile, as a place where there would be no foreign eyes to see or to desecrate. Very few white men have ever entered hidden Shensi. It is conservative and tradition-clinging even for China. It is in the part of the country where hatred of the foreigner is bitterest and most intense. So much I learned about Shensi on my arrival in Pekin, but my most diligent inquiries could discover no more than this. The *Christian Herald*, of New York, had raised a

fund for the sufferers from a famine in Shensi, and had cabled the money to the only missionary in the province. As agent of that fund, I had been sent to China to investigate famine-conditions and to report on them. I supposed that a few days' journey into the interior from Pekin would be sufficient for the obtaining of all the information I desired, but I soon discovered that I was mistaken. The seven hundred and fifty miles that lay between Pekin and Sian constituted as great an interval of silence as the distance between the Far East and the Far West. If means of communication are a measure of distance, Sian is as far from the coast of China as it is from New York. In Pekin, Chinese officials knew that a famine was raging in Shensi, a fact of which citizens of the United States had been informed by Wu Ting Fang, Chinese minister in Washington, but, as to details, no more was known in the one place than in the other. Two days in Pekin convinced me that, in order to discover anything of conditions in Shensi, I must go to Sian.

The dangers of the journey were fully explained to me. I was told that three hundred miles of the road over which I should have to travel would lead through the province of Shansi, where more missionaries had been killed than in any other of the eighteen provinces; that nearly all of that part of the empire which I proposed to visit was the native haunt of the Boxer and the foreigner-hater, and that

a persistence in carrying out my intention of going to Shensi was little less than taking my life in my hands. In ignoring these warnings I was not actuated by any motive of extraordinary bravery, for that I do not possess. A man far braver than I, who believed the dangers to be as great as they were pictured to me, would have been compelled to abandon the undertaking at the outset, because he must have realised that the odds against which he would have had to fight would have been overwhelming. But I chose to believe that I should not be compelled to fight, and that no trouble worse than the usual discomforts of travel in China was in store for me. Before the allied armies withdrew from Pekin, the Chinese Government had pledged itself to protect the lives and property of foreigners travelling through the country. In determining upon my journey, I believed that the Chinese meant what they said, and I decided to give them the benefit of the doubt. I have never regretted my decision, and my experience in travelling 1,500 miles through the heart of the empire has convinced me that, if the Chinaman were more often given the benefit of the doubt, it would be better for the foreigner that deals with him. The first step in my preparations for the journey was to provide myself with proper credentials that would enable me to claim government protection anywhere in the provinces through which I was to pass.

Thus it came about that one afternoon found me swaying, in a Sedan chair, through the streets of Pekin, accompanied by Mr. E. T. Williams, Secretary of the American legation, on my way to talk over the question of passports with Prince Ching, the head of the government in the capital. On this particular afternoon a sand-storm was in full blast. A Chinese sand-storm is an overpowering, contradictory thing, which seems at variance with the conditions under which it blows. Beneath a cloudless sky, with a wind not especially strong or intense, clouds of sand arise and envelop and subdue. No one knows exactly where the sand comes from. According to one theory, it is a product of the desert of Gobi. Its colour is leaden-gray. There is no escaping it. Mongolian complexions, green palace-roofs, top-hats on Legation Street, even the sun itself, take on a tinge of the universal gray. The entire populace rubs its smarting eyes and retires behind sheltering walls. The sand penetrates everywhere, and absorbs everything, turning all charm and beauty into dulness, making the new seem old, and the old, older. A force that does not wither, but preserves, and that compels the earth to see the sun-light only through darkened glasses.

Through the sand-gusts our chairs swayed and lurched, until, after an hour and a half, we were set down with a thump in front of a gateway, where a guard of Chinese soldiers presented arms. A sergeant directed us across a stone-paved court-yard

into a parlour where Prince Ching stood waiting to receive us. He led the way to a little table in a back room, and seated himself between Mr. Williams and myself, while a servant brought three cups of tea and a basket of cakes.

Because of his rank and position, it is hardly too much to say that Prince Ching is the foremost figure in the Chinese Government of to-day. He is a Manchu, and is an uncle of the Emperor. Besides holding a number of minor offices and titles, he is the head of the Wa Wu Bu, or foreign office, which he had much to do with organising, and upon which devolved a large part of the responsibility for the complex negotiations which ended in the maintenance of the integrity of China, and of the payment of an indemnity to the powers. Li Hung Chang was the only other man prominent at court who remained in Pekin while negotiations were in progress, and his failing health left Prince Ching to battle almost alone with the diplomatic forces of the entire western world.

Prince Ching is apparently about sixty-five years old. His queue and long goatee are gray. His eyes are piercing, and are set far back in his head. His forehead is high, and his lips thin and compressed. He is of medium height, and his shoulders have a slight inclination to stoop. After listening, through the medium of Mr. Williams, to an expression of my desire to go to Sian and my reasons for undertaking the journey, His Highness

smiled, approvingly, and asked his secretary for his card-case. From it he drew a piece of red paper. "This is my card," he said. "It is all you will need to obtain ample protection and assistance anywhere in China. I seldom give my card to anyone, and it is only because of the interest which Americans have taken in our starving people that I present it to you." His Highness's card was not an imposing-looking document. It was about ten inches long and three wide. On one side of it were inscribed the three characters of his name. It was devoid of embellishment of any kind, and would easily have passed for a Chinese laundry-ticket at home. It certainly did not look as though it possessed the merits of an "open sesame," and I fear that my doubts on the subject found vent in my expression as he handed it to me. Mr. Williams expressed to Prince Ching my gratitude for his card, but he added that he thought it would be better if my American passport could be made effective for travel in China.

This His Highness readily agreed to do. He took my passport and looked at it. My English name would not do at all. "I will adapt it for you," he said. He informed me that no name was legal in China unless authorised by the "book of surnames."

Prince Ching noticed my kodak in my pocket as I rose to go, and he asked what it was. When I explained to him its uses, he inquired if it were

AN OPEN SESAME TO CHINA—PRINCE CHING'S CARD.

capable of taking his photograph. I informed him that I thought it was, and he posed himself in front of it in the centre of his court-yard, where all the light that could filter through the sand-cloud fell full on his face.

The next day my adapted passport was returned to the United States legation. It bore the seal of the Taotai of Pekin. It described my name in three characters as Na Ko Su. It said that my mission was one of peace, and it directed the governors of the provinces of Chili, Shansi, Shensi, Hupeh, and Honan to give me every aid and protection within their power. It was just the kind of a paper that I had desired, and its formidable rows of characters and its quaint seal made me confident of being able to get into Shensi and out again without any additional credentials. I had yet to learn that all the characters in the Chinese alphabet, and all the seals in the empire, did not possess one-tenth of the value of that little piece of red paper on which was only the name of the prime minister of China.

Without muc difficulty, I secured the services, as cook, of a Shantung man, a Christian convert, who had been a sort of native evangelist. From his missionary education he had learned to sing "Hold the Fort" and "Jerusalem the Golden," in loud Chinese, and also to fry ham and to make buckwheat-cakes, in accordance with the directions on the can of baking-powder. But the obtaining of an interpreter was a much more serious problem. My

absolute lack of knowledge of everything Chinese made it imperative that I should have with me someone who was familiar with the ways of mandarins and who could be my prompter and guide as well as my medium of speech. After several days of searching, I was introduced to Wang. He was twenty years old and of rather diminutive stature. He had clear, yellow skin and bright, red cheeks. He wore a velvet blouse, a gray, kilt riding-skirt, and around his waist a yellow sash. His queue was neatly braided, and was elaborated into a silk knot at the end after the fashion of Pekin swells. When I sounded his knowledge of Shensi, he replied, quickly, "I know nothing of that country, sir, except that it is a far way, but if I follow with you I will try—to serve you and we can do."

This answer won me, and then and there I engaged him.

Our party of three, with several piles of camp-outfit and a supply of American canned foods, took the southward-bound train at seven o'clock one morning at the platform just outside Chen Men gate.

With Prince Ching's card in my pocket, I settled down on a pile of blankets on a corner of the bench in my compartment of the car, which only a label distinguished from the rest as "first-class accommodation." The diminutive locomotive at the other end of the long train whistled and wheezed. The Chinese conductor kicked two

coolies off the steps of the car. The crowd on the platform jabbered and shouted, and the car-wheels slowly began to revolve over the first of the 750 miles of my journey. I was off for Shensi, the land of Fu Hi and the dragon. Shensi, the cradle of the Chinese race, the home of "old" families, where the 2,000 years of Pekin are regarded as only a yesterday, and whose civilisation was ancient when Romulus and Remus were wolf's children.

CHAPTER II

PEKIN TO PAOTING

THE road from Pekin to Sian crosses three provinces: Chili, Shansi, and Shensi. Shansi is separated from Shensi only by the Yellow River, down which are supposed to have come the first of the Chinese race about 3,000 years before the Christian era. The names Shansi and Shensi are often coupled by the Chinese in referring to the land of their beginnings. In fact, the difference of vowels in their spelling is only a foreign adaptation. In the native nomenclature the pronunciation of the names of both provinces is the same, except that Shensi is given more of a falling inflection than Shansi.

Before the advent of the railroad, the journey was divided into four stages: the first, of 150 miles is to Chengting, in Chili; and the second is of about the same distance to Tai Yuan, in Shansi. The next stage, the longest, is from Tai Yuan to Tung Kwan, on the Shensi border, about 350 miles, while the fourth, and last stage of 100 miles, extends thence to Sian. With native methods of travel, the entire journey formerly occupied from five to six weeks. By the aid of the railroad over the greater part of

the first stage, I was able to accomplish it within twenty-nine days after leaving Pekin.

The railroad through Chili has found the struggle for existence a hard one. It has had to contend with the deep-rooted prejudices of the race among whom it has laid two lines of undulating rail. Its building was an international effort, and evidences of the struggles by which its right of way was wrung, mile by mile, from the government are apparent along the entire line. The first section is of English construction, the next of French, and the last few miles have been added by Belgians. The result is a mixture of the railway-construction-methods of the entire western world. Part of the track is ballasted with rock and part with sand. In one section the bridges are of stone and in the next of wood. Some of the locomotives were made in the United States and others in Belgium. The cars were built in China, after French models. The engineers, firemen, and conductors are Chinese, while the station-agents are usually either French or Germans.

Much as the Chinese disliked the idea of a railroad at the beginning, it has lately become immensely popular with them. They take great pride in it, and are very fond of telling you how it is now possible to go 300 li (100 miles) in half a day.

The trains are all of the variety known in America as "mixed." Only a few of the cars are for passengers. The rest are either freight or open flat-

cars, on which are huddled every kind of merchandise and live-stock imaginable—chickens, bales of cotton, kerosene-oil, horses, carts, and fodder in indescribable confusion, with their owners riding beside the goods they own. The majority of shippers in China place little reliance in waybills, and usually accompany to its destination anything they send over a railroad.

Crude as the railroad is, it is a beginning which may some day connect Hankow and the Yangtse with Pekin. Another line northward was opened in January, 1902, from Hankow to the southern borders of Honan. By-and-by, the two lines will meet somewhere near the ancient city of Kaifeng, and the "steam-dragon" will be supreme in China.

The railroad from Pekin follows the line of the old government high-road across the plain of Chili. There is seldom a minute in the journey when a look through the car-window does not reveal carts, and mules and horses, toiling along through the dust in the same ruts that have been travelled for thousands of years. It is a paralleling of the old and the new that I have seen nowhere else in China. The place for changing cars is Paoting, the capital of the Province of Chili, one hundred miles from Pekin. The railroad does not enter the town, but passes three miles to the westward of it. The train stops beside a pile of sand, left over from the track-ballasting. Into it freight, baggage, and passengers are dumped promiscuously, to be gathered

by cart-drivers, who are quite as eager and competitive as Forty-second Street cabmen. A missionary once described Paoting to me as a city which "persecuted the prophets, and was humbled in the dust." I thought of this description as our cart-wheels sank hub-deep in the bed of white sand, which constituted the road to the town. Whatever humbling has fallen to the lot of poor, dreary, dirty, old Paoting has certainly been of a very dusty character.

The population of Paoting is variously estimated at from 30,000 to 60,000. Previous to the Boxer uprising, it was looked upon as one of the few cities in Northern China which manifested a turning toward the light of Christianity. It was the centre of great missionary activity and it contained two large institutional missions. Within an inclosure, at the south end of the town, were the schools, hospitals, and church-buildings of the American Congregationalists, while a similar series of institutions at the northern limit of Paoting were maintained by American Presbyterians.

The Roman Catholics, too, had a large church and school, and made converts at the rate of a thousand a year. Missionaries of all three faiths began to look forward, hopefully, to the time when the capital of Chili would be reclaimed from the darkness of heathendom. But there came a day, in the early part of 1900, when the storm rose; with little warning, with comparatively little ex-

citement, swarms of Boxers suddenly poured into Paoting. Accounts vary as to whence they came. It may have been from Shantung; perhaps, it was from Shansi; but, whatever their origin, or the direct causes which brought them thither, certain it is that in a few hours they had darkened the streets of the town, and had begun, deliberately and systematically, to put out all "foreign light."

They surrounded the mission-compounds, and killed every one of the missionaries. As there were no survivors of the massacre, one has to depend for accounts of it on the stories of native eye-witnesses. Although these vary considerably, they would all indicate that the awful murders were not accomplished with any more cruelty or publicity than was considered necessary to let all China know that the work was done thoroughly. No one was spared. Even some foreign employees of the railroad were put to death. The mission-buildings were burned, and their ruins would be difficult of identification to-day, were it not for a row of little headstones in a cabbage-field, close to the former Congregational mission, marking the graves of more than twenty men and women. Then the storm passed over, and Paoting settled down again to walk in the paths its fathers had trod for centuries. But it was a quiet of short duration. After the taking of Pekin, it was one of the first places toward which the allied armies turned their attention.

It was the objective point of several of the

earliest and most severe "punitive expeditions." English, French, and German columns vied with each other in impressing upon the inhabitants of Paoting the futility of opposition to the spread of the Gospel. The leading official of the town was tried by court-martial, was found guilty of being a Boxer, and was publicly beheaded.

Temples, where generations of men had prostrated themselves before the gilded Buddhas, and the tablets of Confucius, were levelled to the ground. The idols were overthrown and chopped to pieces. A huge, gaping hole was blown with dynamite in the old city wall, in order to convince the citizens that they were wrong in supposing it invulnerable. An indemnity of many thousand taels was levied upon Paoting, and the way was cleared for "mission-work" to begin over again. It was not the only place in northwestern China where missionaries were murdered by Boxers. Awful as the massacre was, the number killed was not so great as in Tai Yuan, the capital of Shansi, where the motives and methods were more deliberate and cold-blooded. But Tai Yuan escaped with only the payment of an indemnity, and a "suicide-order" for the governor of the province. Tai Yuan can be reached only by long, toilsome marches through the mountains, which make the hauling of artillery-trains and commissary-wagons exceedingly difficult, but Paoting was easily accessible from Pekin. Therefore, Paoting was punished.

At Paoting I was, for two days, the guest of a Presbyterian missionary, the only white man in the place. He was an American, and a graduate of Princeton. It is only by the accident of a chance-absence from his station at the time of the massacre, that he is alive to-day. All of the victims of the storm of Boxer fanaticism were his intimate friends. Yet, for their murderers, the people to whom he had devoted his life, he had nothing but expressions of kindness. The "Forgive them; they know not what they do" spirit was always uppermost. Strong as was the anti-foreign and anti-christian sentiment in Paoting, this missionary was universally beloved. The reception-room of his little compound was a favourite meeting-place for the scholars of the town, who liked to discuss with him the relative merits of Confucianism and the Bible. During our stay at his house I was surprised to see a Buddhist priest enter the court-yard, and make a low kow-tow. "Oh, that chap came to thank me for saving his temple," was my host's reply, when I inquired the cause of such an unusual visit. "You see," he continued, "he is a good man, according to his lights. I have known him and argued with him for many years. The Germans decided to destroy all but a very few temples. Out of regard for my friendship for that priest, I went to the colonel and pleaded that the temple of which he was in charge might be spared. My request was granted, and the temple is standing to-day. It wasn't more than

anyone would do for a friend. I really don't deserve the thanks he gives me. But the best part of it is, that he is beginning to think that Christianity is a queer sort of religion that would make me, a foreigner and a missionary, go out of my way to do anything for a Buddhist. He has just asked me for a copy of the New Testament, in order that he can see for himself what it has to say about forgiveness of enemies."

If China is ever to be converted, it is little acts of genuine Christianity like this that will do it, not Maxim-guns, or dynamite, or indemnities. The man whose hospitality I enjoyed at Paoting was a rare missionary. It is the very few such as he who are the hope of Christianity in China to-day.

Being the provincial capital, Paoting is the nominal residence of the Viceroy of Chili. Although Li Hung Chang held the office of Viceroy, he had not visited the city for several years prior to his death. The Viceroy's yamen, or official residence, in the heart of the town, was, however, always kept in repair and ready for his occupancy. It is a long, one-story building, with two stone lions guarding the gateway and two long, slanting flag-poles always in readiness to fly the Viceroy's flag in case he should see fit to visit his capital. In his absence the government of the province devolves upon the Fantai, or provincial treasurer. The man who held that office at the time of my visit was Chou Fu, an elderly, stout mandarin, who

had been selected for the post because of his reputation for fairness and his ability to get on with foreigners. It was Chou Fu who was really to start me on my journey to the interior and give me my final credentials before I said farewell to railroads and all other forms of modernity. Shortly after my arrival, a messenger brought me his red card, and a few minutes later its owner stepped from his sedan chair at the gate of the missionary compound.

He was accompanied by an escort of about twenty men. He told me, in a direct, business-like way, that he had been informed of my coming by a telegram from Prince Ching, and that he had decided to give me an escort of soldiers, who would accompany me as far as the borders of Shansi, and who would be responsible for my safety while in Chili. "You are not accustomed to travelling in China?" asked the Fantai. I told him that I was not. "Then let me give you a few suggestions. As far as possible, wear Chinese clothes, eat our food, and try to live as we do. You will get along a great deal better if you do."

I inquired about the advisability of carrying a revolver to protect myself in case of attack. "Don't do it," was the reply. "Let all your escort know that you are unarmed, and that you depend on them for protection. If you carry firearms they may think that you are able to take care of yourself, but if you are unarmed they will realise that their

VICEROY'S YAMEN AT PAOTING.

heads will be cut off if anything happens to you." I followed the Fantai's advice, and carried no more serious weapon than a kodak through China. By noon of the next day we were at Ting, the terminus of the railroad. In front of the official inn I found an escort of soldiers awaiting me. They were six in number—great, big, strapping fellows, in red blouses, with Mauser rifles swung over their shoulders. They saluted as I emerged from a tiffin of boiled mutton and pickled ducks'-eggs. Our luggage was thrown into a cart. Two of the soldiers rode beside it, and the remaining four closed in behind Wang and myself. The sergeant, or shi jang, looked back to see that the cart was following, kicked his pony in the ribs, and we were off across Chili.

The further one penetrates into the "Middle Kingdom," the more forcibly does he become convinced that most of his preconceived ideas of the Chinese are wrong. In the treaty ports he has been told by devout missionaries that the people among whom he is to travel are "heathen," and that much of their philosophy and system of living is merely the result of the promptings of the devil. He has been assured by foreign merchants and traders that a Chinaman is a barbarian and an inferior, a sort of combination of child and knave, whom a severe course of discipline may render capable of being a servant to a white man, but who can never be taken seriously, and who can seldom be trusted.

But, after treaty ports and steamships and consuls and railroads are left behind, and the traveller from the West is once fairly started on his way through that vast, swarming, indefinite land, which men on the coast refer to as "the interior," he begins to realise that he is in the midst of a perfect system of civilisation—a civilisation different from, and often quite the reverse of his own, but one, nevertheless, that is in many ways more complete than any he has ever known before, in which nothing ever happens by chance, where there is a reason for everything, founded on an experience that began when the world was young.

One of the first evidences of this is the system by which the bearer of government credentials is guarded and cared for on his journey through the country. The protection afforded by Prince Ching's card means much more than a mere general supervision, such as providing the traveller with an escort of soldiers, and then leaving him to shift for himself.

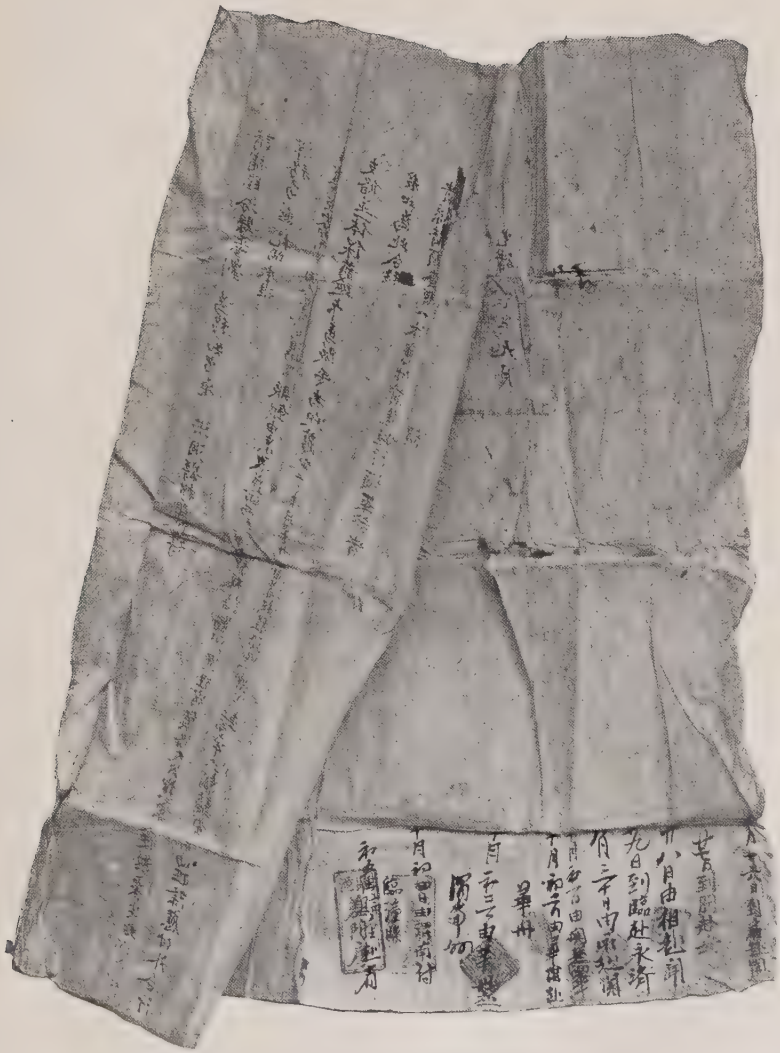
No matter where, or how far, he travels, there is never a minute of the journey when there is not some provincial official who is responsible for his safety. Should he suffer the slightest loss along the route, the responsibility can be fixed immediately, and the official in whose district it occurred can be held accountable, and is liable to severe punishment. The traveller's journey is mapped out for him beforehand. He knows how many days it will take him to go from one place to another. Through govern-

ment channels, he can always obtain as many mules or carts as may be necessary for the transportation of himself and his luggage. A lodging is provided for him at night, and, yet, he is in everything a free agent. In no sense is he "personally conducted." He is never annoyed by effusive hospitality, much less by incivility or insult. Once arrived in a town or village, he can go where he likes, visit whatever points of interest he wishes, ask all the questions that come into his head, and he will be treated far more kindly than would a newly arrived Chinese laundryman in an interior American town. It is a unique and original system, which, in the West, finds a counterpart only in the bill-of-lading for the transfer of freight across countries that we are pleased to call civilised.

The wenshao is the Chinese bill-of-lading, for the traveller and all his belongings. It is issued by the mandarin of the shen, or district, from which the journey begins. It consists of a folded piece of thin paper, on one side of which is set forth a description of the traveller and a list of his effects. His passports and credentials are also described, and the number of mules, or carts, necessary for his transportation, is enumerated.

On the opposite side of the wenshao is the seal of the mandarin who issues it. It is addressed to the mandarin of a shen some six days' journey distant, who, on receiving it, must issue another similar document to a mandarin equally distant.

In addition to this, at every intermediate town which marks the end of a day's journey, the mandarin is obliged to affix his seal, his signature, and the name of his district, or shen. The wenshao thus becomes a complete record of the traveller's progress, with the responsibility for his safety always resting upon the mandarin who last signed it. Another benefit conferred by the workings of a wenshao is the immunity it gives to its bearer from the horrors of Chinese inns. In every town or village, no matter how small, there is, at least, one inn, for the convenience, or—to speak more correctly—for the inconvenience, of the public. Few forms of human habitation anywhere in the world can be more cheerless or inhospitable. Imagine a large, square yard, filled with a heterogeneous collection of carts, merchandise, braying mules, and kicking ponies, and you will have some idea of what the most important part of an inn is like. Around three sides of the court-yard are long, one-story sheds, built of mud, and covered with thatched, straw roofs. In these are the rooms of the inn's patrons. The only furniture in each room consists of two mud-beds, or kongs, a small table, and two chairs. Here meals are served. The menu usually includes rice, tea, and, in some parts of the country, of mian, a kind of macaroni. By the payment of a few cash, your cook is given access to the oven, in the inn court-yard, and is allowed to prepare such food as he can purchase in the town-



A WENSHAO.

market. Another constant source of delight in an inn is found in the "razorback" hogs, which the proprietor frequently keeps as pets, and which he permits to range at will through his patrons' rooms. The hogs are very well domesticated, and have a happy way of rubbing up against your legs when you are eating your evening meal, and of climbing up on your kong after you have blown out the candles. Besides the hogs, there are swarms of fleas, and insects silent and stealthy that are more often endured than mentioned. Anyone who travels through China can make up his mind that he will have to undergo a certain amount of "life" at inns, but, provided with a wenshao, he can avoid it in all the larger towns by staying at the kung kwans.

A kung kwan is an official hotel owned by the municipality and under the control of the shen mandarin. The banchaiti, as the man in charge of it is called, is a member of the mandarin's official household. Upon the arrival in the town of a man with a wenshao, it is the business of the banchaiti to take a corps of servants, whom he has engaged for the purpose, to the kung kwan, open it, and clean it, as much as Chinese houses are ever cleaned. He must also have two cups of tea made for the traveller to drink immediately on his arrival. These preparations completed, the banchaiti replaces his dirty cap with a mandarin's hat as a reminder of his official position, and then, with the mandarin's card

in his hand, he stands at the door, awaiting his guest.

The style of kung kwan architecture is about the same in all parts of China. The official inn is usually built of stone, one story in height, at the rear of a series of court-yards. Few kung kwans are less than a hundred years old, and many of them received their first guest several centuries ago. Because their occupants are usually mandarins, they are arranged with a special view to an observance of Chinese official etiquette and good form. The motif in their construction is the principle of right and left, which pervades every department of mandarin life and ceremonial. In eating, sleeping, talking, and walking, anywhere amid Chinese civilisation, the left hand is always the place of honour. The right hand is an inferior position, which the stranger from the West must carefully avoid if he wishes to retain the respect of the people among whom he is living. The centre room of the kung kwan is a square hall which serves as a parlour and dining-room. Against the wall facing the entrance is a large divan called a kong. A low table in the centre divides it into two seats. For a kung kwan guest to so far forget himself after a hard day's ride as to drop down at the right side of the little table would be a breach of good manners almost unpardonable. Extending from both sides of the main hall are two wings, each containing one room. The one at the right is often far the more comfortable of the two, but

you must not occupy it. If you do, and allow your interpreter to have the left-hand room, he, and not you, will receive a kow-tow from the banchaiti as he brings the morning cup of tea. Although kung kwans are far better furnished than the majority of houses in the Empire, the beds are no less primitive in construction than those on which sleep the poorest of the population.

A Chinese bed is a pile of bricks about five feet in width and four in height, built across an alcove or along one end of a room. The art of sleeping on such a bed cannot be acquired in one night. One must have had many long days' rides on a hard-gaited pony; he must have been fatigued to the point of exhaustion by sun and dust and wind before he can sleep soundly on that unyielding pile of bricks. Even after he has learned how to do so, he must never be surprised or annoyed if, for the first few hours of the next day, his joints ache painfully, and he has sensations similar to convalescence from rheumatism. In sleeping a Chinaman ties and buttons around him a sort of folding-quilt, called a pooka. I modified this device into a sleeping-sack made of goat-skin, which enveloped me from head to foot. While it succeeded in keeping out the cold, it did not in any way mitigate the discomfort of the brick-pile. I once asked a banchaiti why springs or mattresses were an impossibility. The substance of his answer was that the insect life of China was so numerous and rampant that,

were occidental beds introduced, the sleeper would have to endure active discomfort that would be far worse than the present negative form. It was quite as serious an error, the banchaiti thought, to have too much in a bed as too little. I have not quoted the banchaiti literally, but I have, I hope, paraphrased his language sufficiently closely to explain the reason for the mercilessness of kung kwan beds. Like everything else Chinese, there is true philosophy in their construction, the adaptation of means to an end, and in this case the end is surely most commendable.

Every kung kwan is provided with a first-class Chinese oven, where American food can be prepared with little difficulty, but a constant diet of canned tomatoes and corned beef became so monotonous that I soon was glad to avail myself of the native food which the banchaitis provided for me. My experience of kung kwan menus has convinced me that the objection of most foreigners to Chinese cooking is largely a matter of prejudice, and I do not wonder at the supreme contempt which educated Chinese have for the "foreign devils'" food. It is hard to find a dish in the Middle Kingdom that is not based upon the recipe of some sage who lived centuries ago and who had a hygienic principle in mind when he designed it. Chinese food tends much more to vegetarianism than does ours. Beef is never eaten except by Mohammedans. Mutton and pork are obtainable in

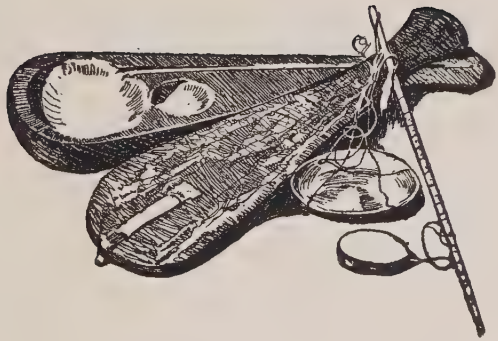
some towns, but the only form of meat which one is sure of obtaining is fowl, which the Chinese know how to prepare with greater delicacy and in a greater variety of ways than any other people I have ever met with. Other things that one is almost sure to find at every well-regulated meal are lotus-stems and buds, bamboo sprouts, bird's nests, pickled duck's eggs, and shark's fins. Knives and forks are a profanation of food so historic and original, and to enjoy it one must accustom himself to the use of chopsticks, a method of eating not at all difficult to acquire.

The hours of travel, as prescribed by Chinese custom, are from sunrise to sunset. Shortly after day-break the occupant of the kung kwan is awakened by the banchaiti, who makes a kow-tow, and again holds up the mandarin's card. This is a polite way of asking for his pay. Theoretically, the traveller is the guest of the municipality, and is allowed to occupy his apartment without charge, but long usage has established a regular rate of tip, or cumshaw, as a perquisite to the banchaiti, which is about double the cost of lodging in an inn. An important person in every traveller's party is the mafu. His work is a combination of the duties of hostler and guide. It is his province to see that the animals are fed and cared for and that the saddle-girths are properly tightened before the morning start. The mafu usually rides at least one hundred yards in advance of the shi jang of the guard, and points out

the way. About five miles before approaching the town which contains the kung kwan for the night, the mafu kicks his pony into a gallop and dashes on ahead to inform the mandarin of the traveller's approach, so that everything will be in readiness on his arrival.

Once away from the haunts of foreigners the only money that passes current in China is taels. A tael is merely a lump of bullion silver which weighs one Chinese ounce. It is paid by weight and not by count. To accomplish this an odd little pair of scales is necessary, which is carried in a wooden case especially arranged for travellers. But the perplexity of taels does not end with the weighing of the irregular-shaped lumps of silver. In scarcely any two provinces is the price of silver the same, and, consequently, there is apt to be considerable difference in the value of taels in travelling a distance of only one hundred miles. In some places the taels are made from purer silver than in others. The scales used in Pekin are graduated differently from those in vogue in the Yangtse valley. To anyone but a Chinaman, the money of his country is a hopeless puzzle. But, crude and clumsy as the system is, it is founded upon a principle which came into use in Europe only as an aftermath of the French Revolution. If you examine the little ivory weighing-bar of every pair of Chinese scales you will see that it is marked off into tenths and hundredths. The tael is divided decimally. Ever since

there was such a thing as money in China, it has been based upon the decimal system. The oldest arithmetic contains an exposition of decimals. That arithmetic was published in the Chou dynasty, and the Chous reigned 1100 years before Christ.



CHAPTER III

ACROSS CHILI

TO the south and west of Paotingfu there stretches a gray plain which embraces nearly all of the province of Chili and extends to the foothills of the Shansi Mountains. Across the plain zigzag several high-roads connecting the larger towns, much as railroads do in the United States. Old and much travelled as the roads are, they are not maintained by the government, nor are they public property, as on the western side of the world. This is not true of roads in all parts of the empire, but it is the case in Chili. A road in that province is simply a continuous strip of land appropriated as a thoroughfare from the edges of the fields. The use of part of his land as a road does not interfere with the owner's possession of it. He has still to pay taxes on it as part of his property, and he fights tenaciously against any widening or improving of the thoroughfare which may further encroach on his farm. Being private property, it is the business of neither the general government, nor of the district mandarin, to improve the road, and the result is that it becomes merely a rut-worn track which rain and melting snow convert into a mud-bog, and

the summer sun turns into furrows of dust. The roads were in the height, or rather depth, of the dust period when we left Ting in the middle of October. Although a brisk autumn wind was blowing and the temperature was quite cool, the rays of the sun were fierce in their intensity. Nearly all the men we met wore peaked, broad-brimmed, straw hats. Cases of sunstroke, I was told, are known in Chili as late as November. The appearance of the country for miles about was not unlike a huge vegetable garden at home. Chili farms seldom consist of more than three acres, and in many cases they are not more than one acre in extent. The naturally fertile soil is constantly manured and is made to produce two crops a year. Every foot of it is under cultivation. The climate and soil are similar to Northern Illinois. Fields of cabbages, onions, millet, and buckwheat are interspersed with patches of cotton and tobacco, which are raised all over China in a temperate climate that would be considered prohibitive in other parts of the world. Every quarter of a mile or so a donkey at the end of a long pole may be seen walking around a windlass. He is raising water from a well by a chain-pump, whence it is discharged into the furrows that cross the fields in every direction. Some of the wells are very deep and are constructed on the Artesian principle, a series of hollow bamboo-rods taking the place of iron pipe. A well-donkey is a thing essentially Chinese. No one drives him or

apparently takes the slightest interest in him. He wears big, straw blinders over his eyes, which prevent his seeing anything. He is oblivious of his surroundings. All the ordinary aims and ambitions of donkey life he seems to have forgotten. Hour after hour he walks slowly around the windlass, only a speck on the flat landscape, only a cog in the simple but vast system of agriculture which keeps millions of men alive.

The milestones of Chili are square, truncated pyramids of brick, about twenty feet in height, placed by the road-side at a distance of five li apart. Guide-books and descriptions of China usually impart the information that a li is equivalent to three-tenths of an English mile, but in reality a li can hardly be called a unit of distance at all. It is more properly a measure of the time consumed in going from one place to another over a level road. Across the plain which we were traversing the five-li milestones appeared at regular intervals of one mile and a half, but, in the mountains, they were frequently separated by a distance of not more than half a mile, while a river a mile wide was usually estimated as ten li, on the theory that it took three times as long to cross it in a ferry as it would to ride the same distance on land. By the roadside we saw numerous stone monuments consisting of two upright pillars, connected at the top by a slab of granite. Along the upper edge were usually stone-carved dragons and grotesque figures of dogs and tigers. An inscription

on the slab invariably recited that it was erected by some Emperor in honour of a widow of the vicinity who had never married again. According to Chinese standards, this loyalty constitutes the highest virtue of which a woman can be capable, and in recognition of it a fund is set aside every year from the imperial treasury for the building of these monuments all over the empire, although I saw many more of them in Chili than anywhere else. In this part of China there are no isolated farm-houses, as in America. Arable land is too precious to permit of its being covered by houses or barns. As a means of saving every square foot, the population herd together in the little villages which occur about every half hour in a progress across the plain.

The houses are usually one story in height, and are built of mud, with thatched roofs, and windows covered with paper, for away from the railroads glass in China is found only in very few places. Except in the evening or early morning, one seldom sees any men in the villages. They are given over almost entirely to the women and children, while the male portion of the population is at work in the surrounding fields. The houses are built close together along the roadside. Just beyond the last house is generally to be found the village mill. It consists of a round flat stone about ten feet in diameter, elevated about three feet from the ground. On it the corn is placed, and a heavy stone roller, attached to a spindle in the centre of the stone is pushed over it. In

other parts of China I have often seen the rollers dragged over the nether stone by donkeys in a method similar to a well-windlass, but in Chili the roller is almost invariably propelled by women.

On their little, bound, crippled feet they hobble round and round the millstone, slowly pushing the creaking roller in front of them. It looks like an exceedingly painful process, but the women laugh and chatter, as they hobble, as though they enjoyed it. In every village there is at least one small temple or shrine. It is usually open at the front, and on a stage at the rear is a row of idols, all painted in bright colours and liberally besmeared with gilding. The temple is apt to be the best building in the village and is often built of brick. For a Chinaman any sort of clay soil seems possible for brick-making. He first finds a part of his land which he can spare from cultivation. As this is usually a difficult matter he often selects a place by the roadside. There he digs a hole, shovels out the clay, mixes it with straw and water, and then stamps it down into moulds. He piles the embryo brick where the rays of the sun can get at them and goes away. In the course of a week or so they are finished. Like the clay from which they are baked, the bricks are a dull gray in color and are inclined at first to be damp, but the permanency of such structures as the walls of some of the older cities proves that ultimately they become quite as

CHILI BRICK MAKING.

A HALT FOR THE NOON-DAY MEAL.

hard and impervious to the elements as brick made with the most approved machinery. The Pekinese have a proverb which says: "The first year after a brick house is built let your enemy live in it, the second year your friend, and the third year occupy it yourself."

Our first stop for the night was in the little town of Sinlo. The mandarin of the place came to see me almost as soon as I was settled in my kung kwan. He was a simple, kindly man whose experience with foreigners had apparently been very limited. With the tea-cups between us, he at once started a conversation consisting largely of questions. "What is the name of the Emperor of America now that the old one was killed?" he asked through the medium of Wang's interpretation. When I replied "Roosevelt," the mandarin's sides shook and the corners of his mouth twitched with suppressed laughter. "He laugh," explained Wang, "that a man should have such a funny name." My visitor wanted to know how old the "American Emperor" was and what were his yearly revenues. He asked his questions with the utmost politeness, but in his manner there was a trace of the same condescension which might characterise the conversation of a prosperous, eminently respectable American with a Chinaman. The "stranger from a-far" was to be treated courteously, but he was not to be allowed to forget that he was a barbarian, and, therefore, could never hope to be an

equal. The Philistine is a plant indigenous to all lands and all civilisations.

A day's journey from Sinlo brought us to Chengting, a fu, or prefecture-capital, which was the headquarters of the French army during its occupation of Chili. The kung kwan, where we spent the night, had been the official residence of the commander of the invading forces. It contained a porcelain lamp that would not light and a clock which could not be made to keep time, but the banchaiti pointed to them with great pride, as evidences that Chengting was not entirely ignorant of Western civilisation. Two miles from Chengting is the Huto River, which must be crossed before one can strike the road to the westward, which leads to Tai Yuan and Shansi. We made our way along its low, sandy banks until the mafu shouted and pointed to a party of three men with their nether garments tied in bundles on their heads, wading across the stream. This indicated the point where the water was shallow enough to enable us to ford it, and then we accordingly plunged in, horses, cart, mules, and all, touching the sandy bottom for three-quarters of a mile. Fording rivers is one of the necessities of travel in China, and to do it gracefully, without wetting one's feet or undue splashing, is an art which, like sleeping on brick-beds, has to be acquired by practice. Ferries are used on the broader and deeper rivers, but the only method of crossing the great majority of smaller streams

is by wading. The ponies and mules do not seem to mind the process in the least, and the only difficulty is to prevent them from stopping to drink in mid-stream. Without the slightest warning, a pony will pause suddenly, just where the current is strongest, and, dropping his head, will begin taking long gulps of the muddy water. The operation is performed so quickly that, if his rider is not careful, he will follow the line of the pony's arched neck into the stream.

Westward from the fords of the Huto, the road is some thirty feet below the level of the plain. The effect of riding over a highway of this kind is the same as passing through a cañon. On either side rise precipitous, gray cliffs of hard clay, with just a patch of the blue, brassy sky visible between them. These ravines are not the result of natural causes, but are due to ages of incessant travel. Centuries of wagon-ruts in the same path have worn them to their present depth. No one ever has improved the roads or has changed their direction until, from sheer wear, they have sunk to the level at which one finds them to-day.

It has been pointed out by some critics of China that it possesses few monuments of its greatness; that it has no marble temples or jewelled palaces. But China needs none. Such furrows as the sunken roads on the face of the land itself are monuments of a continuous civilisation almost as old as the race.

It was in passing through these rut-worn ravines that the philosophy of Chili carts first became apparent. As far as the mountains of Shansi, the carts are all built on the same model as in Pekin. They are heavy and springless and have only two wheels. From the centres of the hubs the axles protrude a distance of six or eight inches. In passing other vehicles these extensions are very inconvenient, but when, as in the sunken roads, one side of the way is much higher than the other, and the whole weight of the cart and its contents often rests on one wheel for a mile or more at a time, it is liable at any moment to upset and fall on its side. In this event, under ordinary conditions, the lower wheel might buckle under the cart and break. But such a catastrophe is prevented by the axle-extension, which receives the force of the fall and saves the wheel. From Hwuyluh we were in the hill-country. The dust of the plain of Chili was left behind. In its place was a rocky, narrow trail that wound in and out among the mountains. Hwuyluh is the centre of the mining industry of North China.

Probably no one knows what the mineral resources of China are, but some idea of them can be obtained from the thousands of freshly moulded iron pots and kettles that come into Hwuyluh from the surrounding country. Progress up some of the hill-roads is really difficult because of the long processions of men and boys with crates filled with these products of the iron mines swung from rods on their

shoulders. The kettles are moulded in only a very few shapes, after models that have been in vogue for ages, but the vast quantities of them that are shipped every day from Hwuyluh would indicate that the old mines from which they come must be almost exhaustless. Long trains of donkeys are frequently met with, each with two blocks of coal balanced on his pack-saddle. The coal is the finest kind of anthracite, and all of it has to be sawed into these blocks for transportation. The labor of sawing the coal and the accompanying waste must be enormous. Yet this same coal sells in Pekin at prices about equal to twelve American dollars per ton. Coal is burned as fuel in many parts of Northern Shansi, and I was told (although I saw nothing of the kind myself) that in many places all that a farmer has to do to obtain it is to dig it out of a hillside on his land.

From Hwuyluh to Tai Yuan carts almost cease to be a means of conveyance. They are met with only at very rare intervals, drawn by three or four struggling mules. The ordinary method of travel is on the backs of ponies or donkeys. Chinese ponies are never broken, in the American sense of the word. It is always to be expected that on first getting astride of a pony in the morning he will kick and buck, and, perhaps, try to run away. This manœuvre does not worry the average Chinaman in the slightest; he merely gives the pony free rein and lets him run. In the course of half an hour or so he

finds the exertion of running away somewhat exhausting, and he then settles down to his normal gait, which is usually a hard, jolting trot, although about one pony in every ten is capable of a single-foot. Having once struck his gait, the pony goes ahead like a little machine. He is always ridden with a loose rein. Yet, he keeps to the road, and never misses his footing. Up hill and down—across plains and through mountain-trails, he keeps up the same monotonous hard trot. When he comes to a river he never pauses an instant, but plunges in, fording it if possible, swimming if necessary. And all this, with no food all the year round but chopped corn-stalks, and without ever experiencing the refining influence of brush or currycomb. At the end of the day's journey the mafu walks him up and down the courtyard for half an hour as an antidote for stiffness of the knees. Then the saddle is removed, and he is allowed to roll in the dust of the road for a few minutes. After that, he is tied to a manger under a shed, and the next morning is ready for another thirty miles.

As the way wound among the hills it began to develop into the nearest approach to a road, in our sense of the word, that I had yet seen in China.

The roads for miles near Hwuyluh are paved with square blocks of granite. Their exposed surfaces are about the size of flag-stones in a Broadway sidewalk, but they are from two to two-and-a-half feet in thickness. How thousands of these blocks

A GRANITE HIGHWAY.

were ever placed on the steep hillside without steam-hoisting machinery is one of the many mysteries of things in the interior of China which have yet to be explained. The stones are in some places sadly in need of repair, and are deeply grooved and indented by wheel-ruts. No one in that part of the country to-day can remember when the ordinary method of travel was other than on the backs of animals. Apparently, not enough carts pass over the road in the course of an entire year to make the slightest impression on the granite surfaces. Yet there the ruts are often from five to eight inches deep, seemingly a survival of a time long passed in Chinese history, when the road over which we were travelling was the great highway of the Empire, when it was crowded with the commerce that centred in the capital in Shensi.

The last stop in Chili was at Tsingting, a pretty little town divided into two parts by a tributary of the Huto. Across the river is what was once a huge bridge, built of stone. Some hundred and fifty years ago a spring freshet carried away one of the spans. It has never been replaced, and the portion of the bridge still standing is now used only as a sort of promenade by the citizens of the town. The generations of men who have had occasion to pass through Tsingting, since the disappearance of the span have all been compelled to ford the river a quarter of a mile below the bridge. The Chinese are quite as disinclined to repair as they are to build any-

thing new. They have a sort of fatalist belief, that if heaven had intended them to have a bridge, the freshet would not have come to destroy it. The catastrophe proved that bridges were not for Tsingting. The mandarin of the town was noted through all the country roundabout for his exceptional integrity and ability. When I went to see him, I found him standing at the door of his residence. He received me in a delightfully informal way and ordered a feast brought in as we talked. The object of my visit was only to procure two additional donkeys for the next day's journey, but our conversation soon expanded into a general discussion of the present Chinese situation. "Whether we like foreigners or not," said my host, "China must imitate some European methods, if she wishes to maintain her dignity and self-respect; but," he added, "I think there are some things in which foreign nations might imitate us, and be better for doing so," and the mandarin smiled and cracked a watermelon-seed between his teeth. "He is clever man," Wang observed, "he understand the mandarin business." It was dark when we left his residence, and he insisted on giving us two men with paper lanterns to walk in front of our horses' heads and show us to the ford. Behind us followed more than a hundred of the townspeople, who stared at us curiously, and tried to listen to snatches of my conversation in English with Wang. Whenever they succeeded in catching a sentence or two, we

could hear a half-suppressed ripple of laughter pass over the crowd behind us. To many of them it was their first experience of any language more foreign than Manchu.

CHAPTER IV

BEYOND THE WALL OF SHANSI

A STONE tablet stands on a hillside five miles beyond Tsingting. Large characters carved in the stone record the fact that it marks the boundary between Chili and Shansi. Strewn along the tops of the neighbouring mountains are heaps of mouldy brick. These, the mafu explains, are "the great wall." With one's mind filled with impressions of a great wall towering far above the surrounding country, with a space on the top wide enough for three chariots to ride abreast, these brick piles are a sad disappointment. So far as their usefulness is concerned in determining the form or character of the wall itself, they might just as well be the *débris* of a brick-yard as a survival of China's greatest monument. But they do prove that Mung-tien, the general who superintended the building of the wall for Shih Hwang-ti, two hundred years before the Christian era, clearly understood the strategic advantage of a hilltop as a point of defence against an attacking foe. The brick-heaps follow the ridge of the hills as far as the eye can reach to the north and south. The direction of this section of the great wall along the eastern border of Shansi is almost at

right angles with the main line, which runs westward from Shan-hai-kuan, on the Gulf of Chili, almost to the limits of Kansun Province. The southern branch of the wall shows the extent of the Chinese Empire at the time it was built. The incursions of the Tartars were to be dreaded not only from the north, but also from the eastern plain, now included in Chili Province. When Mung-tien was superintending the building of the wall, the Black-Haired People were still centred around the valley of the Yellow River and its tributaries. The road into Shansi makes a detour up the side of a hill before it turns sharp to the westward and passes between the brick-piles. The object of this was apparently to make approach to the wall as difficult as possible for an enemy. The bastion-towers of what was once a gate across the stone-paved roadway are still visible.

Just before we reached the wall we were met by a party of six soldiers, in whose manner and general appearance there was a touch of something that was foreign and not entirely Chinese. Instead of the usual crimson and white blouses, they wore complete uniforms of blue khaki, which fitted better and were more trim than any I had previously seen in China. Mauser rifles were swung over their shoulders, and they wore their cartridge-belts with a jauntiness that would have done credit to any army in the world. While I was wondering who this new type of soldier might be, the shi jang, who was dis-

tinguished by a sword, advanced and touched his hand to his turban. This was in itself a peculiar gesture for a Chinaman, because the average soldier of the Empire salutes only by clasping his hands in front of his face and bowing. The shi jang pointed to a white badge on his right arm, on which were the words, in English, "Shansi Police." He explained that his party had been sent to meet us and to escort us to Tai Yuan. I thanked him and handed him a cigarette, which he looked at rather suspiciously before lighting with his striking-flint. Then he gave a short "Hi" to his men. They sprang on their ponies, and our journey through Shansi was begun. The mounted police-force of Shansi is the most newly foreign thing in the interior of China to-day, and is the only real sign of anything like an inclination toward Western methods that I met with anywhere in the country.

Because of its murders of missionaries, old Shansi came very near being invaded and "punished" by the allied armies. The Germans sent a column as far as the great wall, and threatened all sorts of things if the province did not at once come to terms. The panic-stricken provincial government, not only agreed to pay all the missionary indemnities demanded, but, in addition, introduced several innovations for the purpose of propitiating the "strangers from afar," and chief among these was the Shansi police. It is their especial duty to guard the life and property of all foreigners who

A SHANSI POLICEMAN.

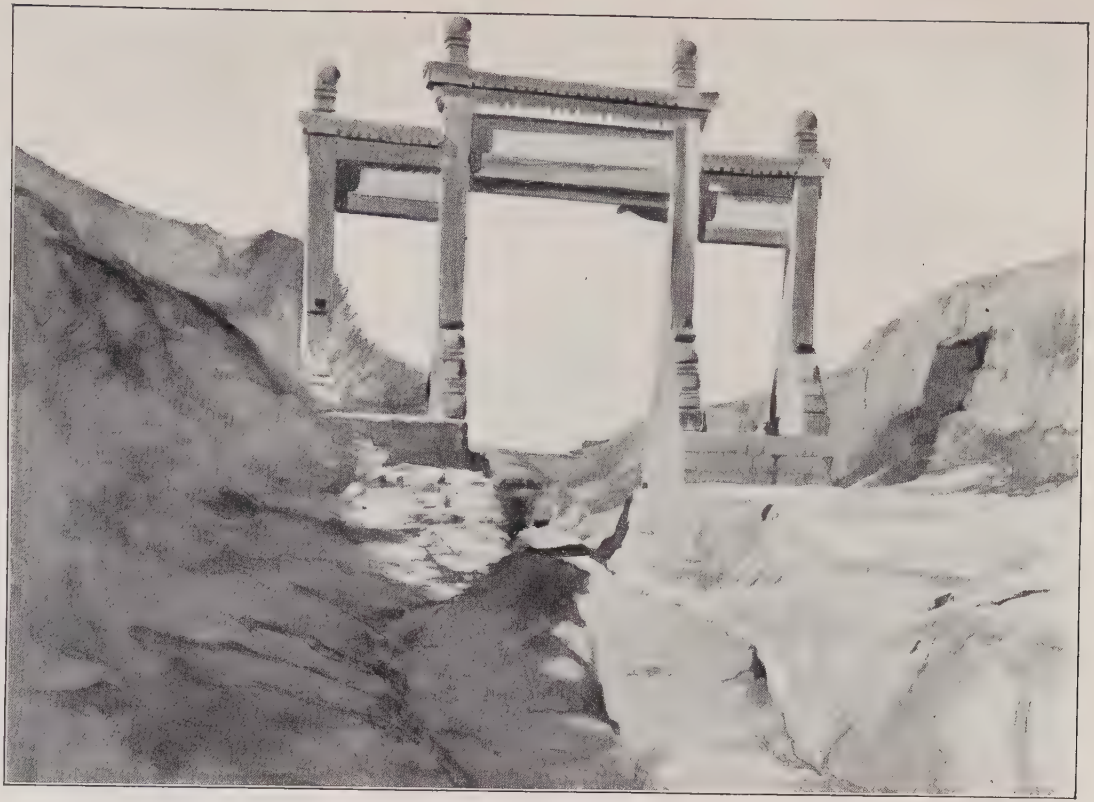
A REGULAR OF CHILI.

may chance to pass through the province. With the police a wen shao is not a necessary credential. All that one need have in travelling to Tai Yuan is the passport of his own government. This the shi jang examines and approves, then jumps on his pony, and gives his men the word to follow. In towns along the road, at a distance of thirty or forty miles apart, one finds a building labelled, curiously enough in English, "Police-station." Into this the police-escort disappear, to be replaced by another relay of the same number, who accompany the traveller over the next stage of the journey. The system is remarkably perfect and well-organised when one considers the short time it has been in operation and how contrary it is to the ordinary, undisciplined methods of Chinese soldiery. To be sure, the breeches of their rifles show that the date of their manufacture was 1876, and it is exceptional for a Shansi policeman to possess more than three cartridges at a time; but these are minor details, and the adaptability, discipline, and easy swing of the newly organised force go to show what the Chinese could do as soldiers if properly drilled and armed. In addition to their other duties, the Shansi police carry the mail across the mountains from the newly established post-office in Tai Yuan. Swinging across the pommels of their saddles are the raw-hide mail-sacks of the Imperial postal-service. From what I saw of their system of handling the mail I am inclined to believe that the average Shansi

policeman has only a very indefinite idea of what a letter is. He often holds the sealed mail-bag up to the light and tries to look through it. He uses it as a blanket at night and as a cushion in the day; but he knows that if one of the mysterious pouches should be lost or stolen, he would "lose his face" forever, and the result is that the Shansi mail now reaches Pekin twice a week with unfailing regularity. A Shansi policeman is just about the "best fellow" to be met with anywhere in China. He has all of the frankness and light-hearted gaiety which distinguish a true soldier the world over. He laughs merrily at times, an unusual act for a Chinaman. His long pipe and tobacco-pouch are always tied to his cartridge-belt, and nothing seems to please him so much as to light the foreigner's pipe with a spark from his own lighting-flint. He is a moving encyclopedia of information about the country over which he rides. He knows all the legends about the heroes and spirits and dragons who have at different times played a part in the history of the mountains. He has picturesque incidents to relate of the roadside-temples, and he can give you the biographies of nearly all the dead mandarins whose stone tablets adorn the hills.

Once across the great wall, the traveller begins to realise the difference between old and new China.

Shansi and Chili differ quite as much from each other as do Massachusetts and Kansas. One of the first-noticed points of dissimilarity is the much



AN "OLD" ARCH—SHANSI.

greater number of monuments and massive temples in Shansi than in the Chili plain. Spanning the road at frequent intervals on the way to Tai Yuan are huge, square archways, built of stone. They are devoid of the carvings and bizarre ornamentations which characterise the architectural style of the Ming and Ts'ing dynasties. They belong to a much older period, and in their outlines curves are noticeably lacking. Their builders either possessed no knowledge of curves or else purposely wished to avoid them. The pillars supporting the arches are always square and rest upon four-cornered pedestals.

Along the roads, too, are gray-stone tablets, commemorative of men and women who died long ago. The tablets frequently rest on the backs of stone tortoises, carved with a remarkable fidelity to life. In Chinese mythology the tortoise is given a very high place. From the markings of its shell are supposed to have come the first suggestion of character-writing. Because of the great age to which a tortoise lives, it is also looked upon as an emblem of immortality. Some of the tablets are erected to the memory of "good mandarins," and the inscriptions tell how the dead official "improved the roads" of his shen, or perhaps "gave a thousand taels to the poor." Other tablets are tributes of grateful pupils to dead teachers who first expounded to them Confucian wisdom. A few are in honour of men in very humble walks of life, but whose virtues made a great impression upon their fellow-townsmen. They

are interesting commentaries on Chinese standards of goodness. Their inscriptions read like this: "He lived in poverty all his life in order to provide for his father," or a tablet to a woman may say, "She was obedient to her husband, and when he died, mourned for him all the rest of her life." In front of some of the tablets are upright stone bars, which give them something of the appearance of animals' cages. In the space between the stone slab and the bars, the spirit of the dead man is supposed, in an indefinite way, to make its headquarters, and for this reason it is not at all unusual to find bowls of rice and other food placed there by pious relatives in order to satisfy the hunger of the departed spirit.

In passing a grove soon after entering Shansi, I noticed tied to the branches of one of the trees a number of little red streamers, inscribed with characters. This was my first glimpse of one of the "praying-trees" that are found in hundreds of places scattered all over Northwestern China. They are believed to be the dwelling-places of spirits who possess the power of healing diseases and of bringing troubles to a happy termination. The trees are devoutly worshipped, and everyone who has been benefited by them records the fact by hanging a piece of red cloth on the boughs, where it serves much the same purpose as a patent-medicine testimonial might on our side of the world in calling attention to the wonderful properties the tree possesses, and in inducing others to worship its spirit. The reason why popu-

lar belief selects certain trees as dwelling-places of spirits, to the exclusion of others, is a question which I have never heard satisfactorily explained. Out of a grove of twenty or thirty trees, all of about the same age and size, one only will be decorated with red rags in honour of its curative powers. Whether or not a sick Chinaman experiments with every tree he may come across until he finds one that will heal him of his infirmity, I do not know, but certain it is that the "praying-trees" seem to be selected entirely at random, and without any signs of spirit-habitation that are visible to the eyes of the "outer barbarian."

The rugged beauty of the mountains is in some degree obscured by the terraces which cover them from base to summit. The earth of the terraces is held in place by stone walls, about four feet high, which extend along the sides of the mountain. The stones of which the terrace-walls are built are all loose boulders which can have been placed in their present position only with great labour and infinite patience. Every little patch of ground between the mountain-side and the edge of the wall is under cultivation, usually with wheat or some other variety of grain, but so far as human beings were concerned, the mountain-terraces, when I saw them, were deserted. Men and women were nowhere to be seen. Their absence was explained to me as due to the fact that the spring crop had been planted only a short time before and that, consequently, at that time required but little attention.

Villages along the road are as frequent as in Chili, but their method of construction is often different. In Shansi the houses are frequently built of rough stone, one above the other, against the side of a hill. A dwelling-place for an entire community of several hundred will frequently not cover more than a few acres of ground. From a distance a village of this kind has the appearance of one large building, not unlike a Zuni Indian pueblo in New Mexico. Each house has at least two rooms; one serves as a general living and sleeping apartment, while the other is used as a store-room for the stock of food on which the family subsist during the winter. But no matter how much a village may be concentrated in an effort to economise land for purposes of cultivation, it is always sure to have across the road, as one approaches it from either side, a high, stone wall with a gateway in the centre. On the wall is usually painted in gay colours a grotesque figure of a dragon or a tiger. The wall and the picture are for the purpose of frightening away evil spirits who might be inclined to disturb the peace of the village. In the course of every twenty-four hours, in the Shansi Mountains, one is sure to pass two or more towns of considerable importance. The amount of business transacted in them and the quantity of the produce of the country offered for sale in their markets would indicate that the struggle of wresting a livelihood from the rocky, unyielding soil is more successful than is at first apparent.

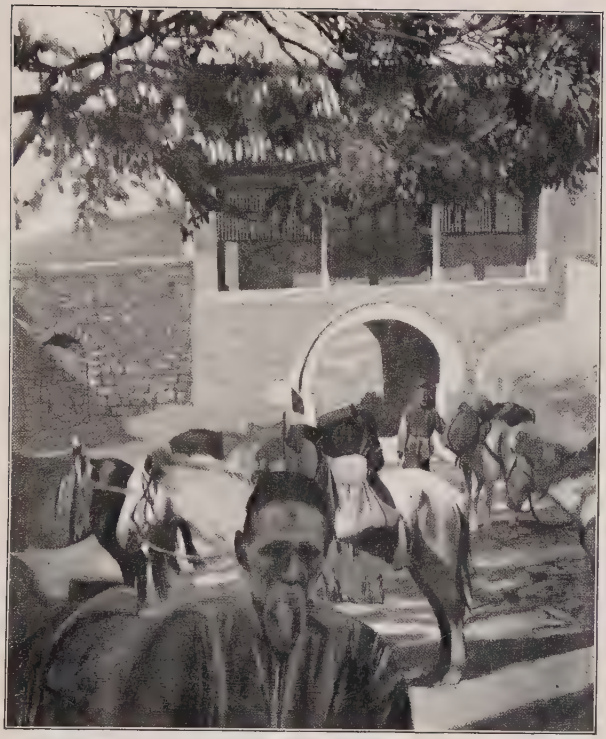
One of the most prosperous of these towns is Ping Ting, about two days' journey beyond the great wall. Beside an imposing-looking temple was a large market, where more than fifty venders of vegetables were squatted on the ground shouting their wares to passers-by. In a few of their baskets I found white potatoes, which proved to be as large and mealy as though raised in Ireland or America. They are not indigenous to the soil of the country and are very hard to obtain outside of the foreign settlements. The white potato was, it is said, introduced into China about fifty years ago by Jesuit missionaries.

For an hour or two after leaving Ping Ting, the steep road wound up the side of a mountain. As we approached the summit, we were confronted by a stone wall, some twenty feet high, built across the road, with a shrine on the top and an archway in the centre only wide enough to permit of two mules passing each other beneath it. The road had sunk at this point to a depth of more than five feet, so that the wall at first glance seemed only an additional obstacle to the highway, and I wondered what motive had prompted its builders to place it in such an awkward position. But the reason became apparent as we passed through the archway and emerged on the other side.

Far, far below us was a gray, furrowed plain, almost circular in shape; rising from it, up and up almost to the hoofs of our horses, in regularity and

harmony, were terraces that completely encircled the plain and looked down upon it like the seats of some colossal amphitheatre. Beyond, to the north and west, were other and higher mountains, whose long, purple shadows fell slanting across the terraces as the sun began to descend from a cloudless sky to meet their snow-capped summits. Yet in all the vast panorama, extending over fifteen miles, there was only one point of vantage where the eye of the beholder could grasp it all; only one where the elements of mountain and terrace and plain retained their due proportions in the picture, and at that point the wall spanned the road. A little further down the mountain-side only a portion of the terraces would have been visible. Looked at from a greater height, the plain would have appeared insignificant, but from the arched gateway the symphony was perfect.

"The stone-wall is a curtain," the shi jang said, as he pointed back to it with his riding-whip. Several centuries ago some man realised the loveliness of the scene commanded by that particular mountain-crest. He did not wish future generations of men, who would toil up and down that steep road, to miss the superb unity of the natural amphitheatre that lay spread out at their feet. So he designed a stone-curtain, narrowly divided in the centre, where, while they paused and wondered for a little, its glories would burst upon them. But this wall-builder, this man possessed to such an ex-



A STONE CURTAIN.

THE SCENE IT DISCLOSED.

ceptional degree with a sense of the beauty of the world in which he lived, was not a "white man." He wore a queue; he was a "heathen;" he was a Chinaman.

CHAPTER V

THE BLIGHT ON THE LAND

NEARLY all of the chain of villages that line the road through the Shansi Mountains from the great wall to Tai Yuan, possess certain common characteristics. Few villages have a population of more than three hundred. They are as isolated and as lonely, perhaps, as any communities of the same number of human beings anywhere on earth. The villagers have no luxuries, and few comforts, yet they are happy and contented, and among them are no paupers. In Chinese villages there are no "poverty alleys." Perhaps no one in the entire community makes more than twenty-five American cents a day, but that sum is enough to clothe him and his family, and enable him to fill the store-room of his stone or mud house with enough corn-meal and millet for the needs of the long, cold winter. The villagers are very dirty, and they defy almost every known sanitary law, but they succeed in living and in maintaining an equality of conditions which prevents both the ambitions and the discontent to which we are accustomed in western civilisation.

I have said nearly all the villages, because in the course of every twenty-four hours, in a progress

APPROACHING AN OPIUM VILLAGE.

through Shansi Mountains, one is almost sure to find at least one village whose conditions, no matter by what standards they might be measured, could never be called happy or fortunate. Even from a distance the difference between the sad village and the rest is very marked. The walls at the entrance to it are crumbling as though the inhabitants had ceased to take any interest in spirits, good or evil. The roofs of the houses are dilapidated and full of holes. A nearer approach reveals windows from which the paper panes are missing and doors supported by only one hinge. No one is selling vegetables in the road, and the one or two shops which the village possessed are closed. In the shadow of the houses a few men and women are lying or squatting—apparently in a stupor. Their faces are drawn and leathery, their eyes glazed and dull. Their clothes are masses of rags, and, what is most hopeless of all, the men have neglected to braid their queues; their hair is dishevelled and matted. Even some of the babies the women carry in their arms have the same parched skins and wan, haggard faces. And the cause of all this is *opium.*

Such a village, whose wretchedness and degradation I have inadequately described, is known throughout the surrounding country as an "opium village." No matter how cheerful and gay my escort of Shansi police might be, they always became silent, and their faces grave and serious, whenever we passed a place of this kind. They almost invariably kicked their

ponies' ribs vigorously as we approached it, and rode through at a gallop. The shi jang was very loath to talk about opium villages. The subject was evidently distasteful to him. He would usually shake his head evasively when I asked him about them, and his answers, as Wang translated them, were invariably to the effect that "they must all die sure." "There is no hope for them." "Opium has got them." But from missionaries in Shansi and provincial officials, I obtained some further account of the havoc wrought by opium in the northwestern provinces of China. Every year a number of the mountain settlements succumb to the blight on the land and sink into "opium villages." The entire population becomes addicted to the habit simultaneously. The drug is introduced into a village. Someone delighted with the sensations which follow his first smoke tells his neighbours. They all experiment with it. They, too, are all charmed with the happy oblivion it gives to cold and fatigue and the dull monotony of their lives. Men, women, and children begin systematically to smoke opium. It is only a question of time before they become its victims. Their fields are neglected; they cease to care for nourishing food; the only interest they have in life is the fatal fruit of the poppy; they cease to be recognised as human beings; they are only dwellers in an "opium village." From that time their doom is sealed. Their village is shunned as far as possible by everyone and they are referred to as a company

of the lost, very much as though they were already dead. By degrees all that they have in the world is spent to satisfy their cravings for opium. Either as a direct result of its use or because of the exposure and neglect incident to it, they die, one by one, until what was for centuries a dwelling-place of peaceful, contented husbandmen becomes only a shapeless mass of crumbling walls and roofless houses, deserted and untenanted, where no sound of human voice breaks the mountain stillness, and where the bitter, Mongolian winds of winter sweep unchecked through the wrecks of homes.

As there are no mortuary statistics in China, it is impossible to give in figures the full force of the destroying effect upon the population of the opium traffic. But no one who has travelled through Shansi and Shensi can doubt for a moment that the number of its victims in these two provinces alone reaches many thousands every year. It is hard to find a town of any size that does not contain at least one opium retreat or cure. On a much larger scale, these institutions serve a purpose somewhat similar to gold-cure and inebriate asylums in America. Some of them are owned by Chinese physicians who profess to have found a cure for the habit, but many are maintained by the different shens or districts, where they exist, as forlorn hopes for the besotted wretches on whom the curse has fallen. Some of the medical missions, too, maintain opium refuges, and in some cases have effected cures by a

treatment which consists of a substitution of morphine pills for opium. The quantity of morphine is gradually reduced until the patient is able to do without it altogether. But many as the refuges are, the number of lives they save is infinitesimal compared with the wholesale, wide-spread destruction which the scourge of opium has brought and is bringing upon China.

It is not intended to discuss fully here the English opium traffic, about which volumes have been written and which still goes on, and probably will go on until either "helpless China" grows strong enough to resist, or the conscience of a Christian nation becomes less complacently callous; but, impressed as I could not fail to be by the deserted, withered villages of Shansi, I cannot refrain from making a few passing observations on some of the phases of the question.

In recognition of a clamour from almost the entire civilised world against the injury which a persistence in the Indian opium trade was inflicting upon China, the British Parliament of 1893 appointed a Royal Commission to inquire fully and thoroughly into the subject. The sessions of the Commission in London lasted for several months during the winter of 1893–1894. The result of their labours and investigations was subsequently published in a report which fills seven volumes. So far as the moral side of the question is concerned, the substance of the entire voluminous document was, that opium is not at

OPIUM REFUGE IN TAI YUAN.

all a bad thing, that if smoked in moderation it did not hurt anybody, that very few persons in China smoked it to excess, and that the Chinese, as a whole, had no desire to stop the traffic.

It is to be regretted that the report did not make its appearance before Mr. Gulliver started on his travels. Extracts from the seven volumes would have made excellent literature for him to read aloud into the ear of the King of Brobdingnag. Even from what everyone knows to be the effect of the use of opium upon its victims in Europe and America, the finding of the Commission that it is almost harmless, is, on the face of it, so little less than a *reductio ad absurdum*, that it would hardly be worth taking seriously were it not that it is bolstered up by a mass of testimony from witnesses who certainly ought to be conversant with Chinese conditions. It is this testimony, it seems to me, far more than the report itself, which might mislead some persons into believing that the findings of the Royal Commission were in some slight degree founded on fact. The following is a sample of this testimony: "We have," say the Commission, "received also a communication in writing from Mr. Duff, a merchant in China of thirty years' standing, whose opinion is that, in the circumstances of their living, food, climate, and habitations, opium has no deleterious effect upon the Chinese, indeed quite the contrary, for it is a positive need and they could not do without it." That anyone could ever have

delivered himself of such an "opinion" would be almost incredible were the fact not recorded in the report. If "Mr. Duff, a merchant," had given it as his "opinion" that the natural tendency of a river is to flow up-hill, or, if he had said that after thirty years' contemplation of the moon his "opinion" was that it was of the substance of green cheese it would have been equally creditable to his judgment and power of observation. It may be possible that during the long period in which Mr. Duff maintained an upright position in China, he, like many foreigners, seldom left a treaty-port. Since reading his "opinion," I have wondered whether, if Mr. Duff were to "stand," not for thirty years but for thirty minutes in some dying Shansi village, where he could see the "circumstances of living" of the inhabitants and the awful wrecks of former "habitations," he would not feel inclined to revise his "opinion" that opium has no deleterious effects upon the Chinese.

There may be Chinese in China who believe in the harmlessness of opium and who desire to have its sale continued. I have been told that there are such, but I confess that I have never met them. On the contrary, of the scores of Chinese in all walks of life who discussed the opium question with me, I have not found one who did not see in opium the blackest and most foreboding cloud that hangs over China to-day. Some of the officials even went so far as to ascribe China's inability to cope with

newly arisen conditions, and her consequent losses and failures, to the present weakened and besotted minds and character of her people due to a century of opium. When the Taotai of the Shansi foreign office wished to assure me of the excellent character of the soldiers who were to accompany me through part of the province he said, "There is not an opium-smoker among them, and you will find that our people are all right as soldiers or anything else when they leave opium alone, but when they use it they are of no use to anyone." The highest form of recommendation or praise which could be bestowed upon a man in the interior of China was invariably, "He has never smoked opium."

But if the Chinese realise the awful evils of opium, why do they persist in smoking it? Looking at the question solely from the standpoint of the consumer, and considering the Chinese as individuals and free agents, I grant this part of the argument of the defender of the opium traffic. So far as he personally is concerned, the blame for every opium-victim's blighted life and wrecked mind and body must rest with himself. There is no denying that while the average Chinaman fears and shudders at the little jar that contains the product of the poppy, it possesses for him a subtle fascination which he is no more able to resist than the bird whom a snake is said to have charmed with its stare can escape destruction. But, as a nation and a government, the fault of the continuance of the

curse does not lie with the Chinese. Ever since 1773, when the British East India Company made its first experimental opium-shipment, China has fought and protested and pleaded to have the importation of the drug stopped. In fact, it is doubtful if the history of any other country during the nineteenth century affords such an exhibition of a long and hopeless struggle in the maintenance of a principle against overwhelming odds. When opium was first introduced into China from western Asia, the government foresaw the death and disaster that would come upon the empire if its use became general. The cultivation of the poppy was forbidden, and the enforcement of stringent laws against the sale of opium succeeded in keeping it out of the empire until its importation in British ships from India began. Finding all appeals fruitless, the Chinese Commissioner Li destroyed several thousand chests of British opium in Canton, and the "opium war" of 1842 was the result. It ended by China's paying an indemnity of $21,000,000 to Great Britain, and in transferring the ownership of the island of Hong Kong to the victorious Christian nation.

By the treaty of Tientsin, in 1860, following another war with England, the importation and sale of opium was declared legal; but, even then, China, crushed and humiliated as she was, did not give up the struggle. In 1868 the prime minister, Wen Hsiang, acting in the name of the emperor, sent a most touching appeal to Her Majesty Queen Vic-

toria, begging her to put a stop to the awful opium-crime which her people were forcing upon China. The appeal "offered anything that might be desired in the way of concession to British trade, anywhere in the empire, agreeing in advance to yield to any demand, if only this one curse against which China had fought in vain for years might be removed." * The only notice ever taken of Wen Hsiang's appeal was a curt rejoinder from the British Minister in Pekin to the effect that he had received no reply to it from his Government and that none need be expected by the Chinese Cabinet.

While the Government of China has not altered its attitude of pleading with all the nations of Christendom to stop the traffic, it has during the last twenty years permitted the cultivation and sale of opium by its own subjects and within its own borders. In southern Shansi and in the valley of the Wei Ho, I have seen hundreds of fields abloom with bright poppy-flowers. So extensive has the domestic production of opium become, that the revenues to the Indian Government resulting from the sale of the drug were reduced from £8,251,670 in 1879–80 to £3,159,400 in 1895–96.† The fact that opium is now raised by the natives is sometimes advanced as an argument that China really desires the continuance of the traffic; but in point of fact

* The Real Chinese Question, by Chester Holcombe; page 278.

† The Report of the Opium Commission by Arnold Foster in Contemporary Review, 1898.

it only goes to prove the reverse. The ancient edicts prohibiting its cultivation and sale have never been repealed, and to this day flagrant violations of them are occasionally punished in Pekin and some of the larger cities; but, realising, after a century of defeat, humiliation, and loss of territory, that attempts to stay the British protected scourge were fruitless, and knowing, too, that England's real motive was only pounds, shillings, and pence, the Chinese Government has decided that if money must be made by the perpetuation of a national crime, the gain shall belong to its own subjects, who are the sufferers. With a patience and dignity that are the heritage of four thousand years, China says to the greatest of Christian nations today: "You are stronger than we. We cannot prevent the deadly scourge with which you waste us at noonday, which stupefies and degrades and withers, which transforms once happy villages into charnel-houses. We cannot stay your hand, but we can and we will retain the profit of the transaction, and your greed will be in vain."

And yet Christians in England and America sometimes wonder why it takes so long a time for the light of the Gospel to penetrate the "heathen" darkness of China.

AN OPIUM BEGGAR.

CHAPTER VI

TO TAI YUAN

PING TING is about half-way through the Shansi Mountains. Beyond it the road to Tai Yuan passes through a wilderness. The terraces and fields appear only at intervals. Towns are farther apart, and, except for the incessant stream of travel one meets with in the road, signs of human habitation are rarely to be seen. The rocks and boulders, too, so prominent in the landscape among the foot-hills of the mountains, disappear as the traveller advances. For mile after mile the hill sides are all of a hard, reddish-brown clay, on which the only vegetation consists of a kind of coarse grass and a few stunted trees. Such few dwellings as do exist consist only of clusters of caves built into the clay of the hill side. The force of the freshets which sweep down the mountains in the spring is evidenced by other caves thirty or forty feet above the level of the road, constructed as places of refuge for travellers who might otherwise be swept away by the sudden torrent. The narrow road runs along the edge of deep gorges and ravines whose banks rise so precipitously that I was in constant

expectation of seeing a balky mule go tumbling over the side, but no such catastrophe ever took place. The mules were Chinese mules; and, although they showed a great fondness for precipices, they never lost their heads or their balance sufficiently to fall over the edge.

This is the part of China where camels are most frequently used as beasts of burden. They are as much a source of terror to Chinese ponies as locomotives are to American horses. For this reason camel-caravans are permitted to travel through the mountains only at night. They are encountered early in the morning or at sunset. Sounding through the solitude of the mountain defiles at these times, one is likely to hear the tinkle of a distant bell. It grows gradually nearer and nearer, until the yellow head and the long, ungainly neck of a camel come swinging around a bend in the road. The bell is the badge of the first camel, who is the leader of the caravan. The rest follow behind in single file, and will go anywhere that the tinkle may lead. The head-driver of the caravan rides the first camel, and three or four other drivers are scattered throughout the train, but by far the greater number of them are never guided in any other way than by the sound of the leader's bell.

The home of the camel in Asia is Mongolia, and from that country come most of their drivers. They are natural nomads, and many of them have no home but their perch on the camel's back. Their

costume differs considerably from the Chinese, and is more picturesque. They wear short, goatskin coats, that in pattern are not unlike American pea-jackets, and raw-hide top-boots that extend above their knees. The Chinese say that the drivers understand the camel-language, and frequently converse in it, and it is a fact that it is a common occurrence, in passing a caravan, to find all the drivers talking, in subdued undertones, to the animals they ride, as though they believed they were being understood. Camels might be called the "long-haul" freight-trains of northwestern China. The local transfers and "short-hauls" are made by carts or donkeys, but it is on the humped backs of camels that freight is carried for hundreds of miles over roads that would be impassable for any other method of transportation. On their clumsy pack-saddles they carry every kind of merchandise known to the Middle Kingdom, from bags of rice to Japanese sulphur-matches. Outside of almost every large town on the way, one finds an inclosure, surrounded by a brick wall. This is a resting-place for camels. Here they sleep during the day, with their drivers lying on the ground beside them.

As we left our kung kwan one morning at a place called Ja Shu, I noticed that my stirrup-straps were made of knotted pieces of old rope. Through Wang I remonstrated with the mafu, who was a hulking, muscular chap, over six feet tall, but he assured me that I would find the rope stronger than

any leather I had ever used. Within half an hour after leaving the town we came suddenly upon a caravan of camels emerging from a steep defile. My pony shied, then stopped short; both stirrup-straps snapped, and I slipped neatly over the pony's head. With an aching shoulder I managed to crawl up on the bank by the side of the road. As I collected myself and looked around I saw Wang vigorously kicking the mafu, at the same time sputtering in language which I could not understand, but which, from the manner of its delivery, I judged to be of a decidedly uncomplimentary character. Wang was so much shorter than the mafu that, in order to make his kicks effective, he had to stand two feet above him on the bank. I called to him to desist, and he came up to me with his black eyes blazing and his yellow face pink with anger.

"What are you kicking him for?" I demanded.

"I tell him he bad man, he foolish man, he give my master stirrups that break 'em. I am teaching him. He is Japanese."*

I told him that, while I appreciated his interest in my welfare, I thought it would be better for him to make no further attempts in the instruction of mafus. I also tried to point out that kicking a man

* The use of the Chinese equivalent of Japanese as a term of opprobrium is a survival of the time when the land of the Mikado was a tribute nation. Great as has been the humiliation which China has suffered from Japan, the worst insult with which a Pekinese of to-day can revile his enemy is to call him "Japanese."

twice his size possessed a certain element of danger to himself.

"Oh, that is all right, sir," he replied, earnestly. "The mafu know he has done wrong. He know he is no good. What can he say? He must be silent. So I can kick."

Wang was right. The mafu did not seem to object in the least to the punishment he had received. He caught my pony and tied my stirrup-strings securely enough to last until my arrival at the next town, where I was able to obtain a pair of leather straps. The episode first called to my attention a peculiar trait of Chinese character, of which I subsequently saw many instances. Whenever anything goes wrong, or a mishap of any kind occurs, a man who is in any way responsible, no matter whether he is intentionally to blame or not, immediately becomes passive. He makes neither excuse nor resistance, but silently awaits the punishment which is almost certain to follow.

Even in the most solitary parts of the mountains we came frequently upon little shrines by the roadside. Some of them were nothing more than caves dug in the sides of the clay banks. Others near the villages were more pretentious, and were built of brick, but the arrangement of them all was the same. On a shelf at the rear were always from six to eight idols, images of the gods and heroes of the three religions of China, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, plainly indicating, by the way in

which they were grouped together, how the three creeds have blended and virtually have become one. The idols are usually made of clay, and are painted in gaudy colours. The strange thing about the shrines is that the worshippers are so few. Of the hundreds of country shrines which I passed in a journey of fifteen hundred miles, I cannot recall more than three where I saw men or women in an attitude of devotion. A Chinese scholar in Sian subsequently explained to me that the shrines are looked upon more as a protection against evil spirits and a source of good luck than as places of worship. They are erected by the Government, but the ground on which they stand is private property, which the owner is only too glad to devote to the purpose, as he believes that no misfortune can befall him or his family while the painted idols stand on his land. In some cases, he places the idols under an additional obligation by washing their faces two or three times a month; a far greater attention than he ever bestows upon his own. He also dusts out the shrine and keeps it in repair. Most of the shrines are cared for in this way, although a few are in charge of itinerant priests who travel from one to the other, and are occasionally to be seen standing in front of them, holding brass bowls for the reception of a few cash thrown to them by pious travellers.

Perhaps the most picturesque characters in the mountains are the imperial couriers, who carry de-

AN IMPERIAL COURIER.

spatches from one provincial capital to another, and from Pekin to the mandarins of the interior towns. No matter how rough or steep the road may be, the courier always rides at a gallop. By a system of pony relays, provided by the Government, a courier is able to cover as many as one hundred English miles a day. He seldom wears a hat of any kind. As he rides with his bare head thrown forward, and his queue tied tightly around it, he has the appearance of a mounted cannon-ball as he comes dashing toward you. His despatches are carried in a broad, yellow sash, tied tightly around his waist.

About two miles before reaching the town of Shou Yang, I was met by a motley collection of soldiers, mandarins' servants, and boys, all wearing a uniform of red and white blouses and round caps. They were led by an old man, whom a sword distinguished as a retired army-officer. He clambered down from his pony as I approached, and told me that he and his followers had been appointed by the mandarin of the place to act as my escort into the town. They fell in behind Wang and myself, and I suddenly found myself enjoying the entirely new sensation of being the central figure in a triumphal entry. The townspeople crowded into the street and filled the doors and windows, pointing and talking. Even the dogs of Shou Yang took great delight in barking at my pony. The enthusiasm reached such a pitch that several citizens discharged

bunches of fire-crackers at the gate of the kung kwan. If any everyday, common-place American, such as I, wishes to know how it feels to have greatness noisily thrust upon him, I can recommend a public entry into a Shansi town. Compared with it the environment of the driver of a circus band-wagon is quiescent and subdued. For a time I was at a loss to understand why ancient, filthy Shou Yang should so honour me. I began to wonder if the fame of any of my few virtues had penetrated so far from home. I had almost decided that such was the case, and was sipping my tea with an entirely unwonted sense of conscious rectitude when I noticed Wang and the banchaiti engaged in earnest conversation. "This place was much missionary trouble," Wang presently explained; "the banchaiti is saying about him."

He told me how an English missionary, named Piggott, had been sent in chains from Shou Yang to Tai Yuan, where he had subsequently been put to death. The mandarin of Shou Yang who had ordered the outrage had since been dismissed from office in disgrace. His successor, Wang said, "Have much afraid of the European. He not want to see them or talk to him because he think they make him trouble, and he will get sack like other mandarin. When we come Shou Yang, the mandarin run away and hide him, but he send old man to meet us, so if trouble come it will be to old man who has lived long time already."

"But why does he make such a commotion about meeting me?" I asked.

"The old man is much afraid the European, too," Wang replied. "He wish to please you, so he get his friends to follow with him and make the noise. You will like it, and you will not make him trouble?"

With a feeling of disappointment at finding that I was still unappreciated I finished my tea, and then sent for the aged leader of my triumphal procession. I told him that no one on earth had ever seemed so glad to see me as were the citizens of Shou Yang, and that no welcome I had ever received had affected me so deeply. I assured him that I could never forget him, and I requested him to convey my greetings to the mandarin, whom it pained me greatly not to have seen. As this, my first effort at an address of thanks, was unreeled in translated sections, I could not help noticing that the yellow shrivelled face of my guest assumed a happier expression, and he settled down on his side of the tea-cups with the air of a man from whose mind a burden had been removed. After he had lighted the cigarette I handed him, he asked something rather hesitatingly, which came to me as "He want to know if you are a missionary, sir?" For reply I not only said, "No," but I showed him Prince Ching's card. The effect was magical. With an agility that could not be expected for one of his years, he stepped into the middle of the room and

made me a kow-tow. "The mandarin will be back to-morrow," he said. "If you will wait you can see him." I expressed deep regret that the length of the journey before me would prevent a longer enjoyment of the hospitality of the town. In the recessional I insisted on the gray-queued veteran preceding me. My last glimpse of Shou Yang was two lines of welcomers, standing facing each other on opposite sides of the road, with their leader by his pony's head between them. He was looking after me in a quizzical way, as if he wondered what manner of man this might be who would visit Shou Yang without being a missionary.

The hill-country was left behind a day's journey from Shou Yang, and we emerged upon a sandy plateau which extended all the way to Tai Yuan. On the morning of the tenth day after leaving Pekin our shi jang rose in his stirrups and pointed to what looked like a range of gray hills that crossed our path some miles away, but on a closer approach they developed into the walls of Tai Yuan, the capital of the province of Shansi, and the end of the first three hundred miles of my journey toward Sian. By referring to my diary I found that the day was Sunday. It was about ten o'clock, and, familiar as I had become by this time with the absence of rest-days in Chinese weeks, I could not help a vague expectation of finding quiet streets, closed shops, and a portion of the population on their way to some place of worship; but I was soon disillusion-

ised. The gateway through which we had entered led directly into the busiest part of Tai Yuan. Shop-keepers were at their counters, venders of various kinds of merchandise shouted their wares in the streets. Mandarin's chairs were constantly passing, and even an opium-refuge showed signs of activity. Its front-door was open and several persons were passing in and out. Tai Yuan certainly was devoid of "emblems of eternal rest."

During the three days following, in which I was the guest of the one missionary and white man in the town, I had an opportunity of seeing something of Shansi's remote capital, which few white men have ever visited. The population of Tai Yuan is about 50,000. It is on the camel caravan-route from Mongolia to the south, and is consequently quite an important business centre. It contains a number of Chinese banks besides several large shops. Its streets are dirty and unpaved, as streets in Chinese towns usually are, but they are also without that regularity of plan and arrangement which are to be found in some of the cities of the empire. It is almost impossible to walk a quarter of a mile on a Tai Yuan street in the same direction. It twists and turns without any apparent reason, and often ends abruptly in the brick-wall of some house built across it. In the 2,000 years of its history Tai Yuan has known many of the devices of government, but it is safe to say that among them all, a commissioner of highways has never played an important part.

Tai Yuan is famous for its siege and capture by the emperor Tai Tsung of the Sung dynasty. For a long time previous the city had been the capital of the dominions of the Prince of Han, who, by an alliance with the Tartars, had set up an independent kingdom and had defied the reigning dynasty. In 980 of the Christian era Tai Tsung and his general P'an-mei led an army against it and laid siege to it. Its people starved and died, but would not surrender. Not a stone was left in its huge walls but what was broken or battered. At length Liu, Prince of Han, seeing that further resistance was useless, threw open the gates and admitted the victorious host. Tai Tsung, struck with his heroic defence, not only spared Liu's life, but made him a duke of the Empire. Every man, woman, and child in the captured capital was exiled to Chili, and the inhabitants of a town in that province were brought to Tai Yuan to take their places.

The people of Tai Yuan, and in fact all of Shansi province, have always been extreme in their hatred of foreigners. It is less than two hundred miles from Tai Yuan to the borders of Western Mongolia, the land which still cherishes memories of Genghis Khan, and which adjoins Turkestan, the present home of Prince Tuan. The fame of this great chief, by whose orders Von Ketteler, the German Minister, was killed, is everywhere in North Shansi. While his residence in Turkestan is ostensibly a banishment ordered by the foreign allies, it would not at all sur-

A MOUNTAIN CHAIR.

prise anyone familiar with the character of the man if the period of his exile from court were really only a period of preparation for another attempt to expel foreigners from China. Rumors that such was the case were rife everywhere in Shansi when I visited the province. One story which I heard in Tai Yuan, was that Prince Tuan was recruiting an army on the border and boasting that within five years not a foreigner would be alive in Pekin. However much truth there may be in the reports, and whatever may be Prince Tuan's future intentions, there can be no doubt that his influence and the ideas he represented were paramount in Shansi at the time of the Boxer uprising. It was in this province that the anti-foreign movement of 1899–1900 first assumed sufficient proportions to be called dangerous.

At the time that the foreign legations were besieged in Pekin, Yu Hsien was governor of Shansi. He set about the work of exterminating foreigners with a systematic, cold-blooded cruelty that is almost unparalleled even in the awful story of Boxer horrors. The only foreigners in the province then, as now, were missionaries. These Yu Hsien had placed under arrest by the district-mandarins and sent to the capital. Some of the missionaries had to be brought from quite a distance, and the work of collecting them in Tai Yuan took several weeks. Yu Hsien confined them in a comfortable building, where he sent them food and

allowed them to have servants. No one, not even the governor's closest advisers, knew what he intended doing with his prisoners. Some of the missionaries, I was told, believed that his object might be to protect them from the violence of mobs. In this way fifty-four missionaries were gathered together in Tai Yuan. Among them were a number of Roman Catholic nuns and the wives and children of Protestants. One Sunday morning they were led into the yamen yard of the governor, where his soldiers put them all to death, with Yu Hsien looking on and directing the massacre. For the murders at Tai Yuan, no mob fanaticism can be urged in extenuation. They were the deliberate, wilful acts of the chief executive of the provincial government in obedience to an "extermination order" from the Empress Dowager's government. Yu Hsien's death was later demanded by the allies in Pekin, and the Empress Dowager was compelled to order him to commit suicide. This he did in Tai Yuan within nine months after his murder of the missionaries. A new governor with less anti-foreign sentiments was appointed in his place; a foreign office was organised in Tai Yuan for the express purpose of dealing with indemnity questions, and Shen Tun Ho was placed at the head of it.

This man, who is one of the most important characters in the present reconstruction period of China, was for two years a student at Cambridge University. He speaks English fluently, and is

quite as well informed on the current topics of the day as any European or American. Because of his known friendliness to foreigners, he had incurred the hostility of the conservative party at court, and, in order to get him out of the way, he had been made mandarin of a little town near the Mongolian border, where he remained in comparative obscurity for more than ten years. When Shansi needed some one who could save the province from invasion and punishment for Yu Hsien's crimes, Shen was hurriedly sent for and made Taotai of the foreign office with full power to settle things as best he could. Instead of confining his efforts to a consideration of mere money indemnities, he began a policy of conciliation, which has thus far worked remarkably well with foreigners and Chinese alike. He instituted the Shansi police and established a post-office in Tai Yuan, not only for the safety and convenience of foreigners, but in order to bring them more in touch with the natives, so that the people of Shansi could realise that the "outer barbarians" were human beings after all.

The privilege of a chat with Shen Tun Ho is perhaps the pleasantest thing that can fall to the lot of a visiting foreigner in Tai Yuan. After days of dull, teacup, mandarin etiquette it was delightful for me when I called on him to hear his inquiry, by way of a beginning, "Do you prefer a cigar or cigarette?" In a very tactful way he told me of his visits to the United States. "I want to see New York

again before I die," he said. "I want to see the high buildings. They were not there when I last passed through New York on my way to Cambridge. I am very fond of America," he continued. "In fact, I like it almost as well as I do England."

I complimented him on the Shansi police and told him that they were the only men I had met with anywhere in China who positively refused to accept "cumshaw."

"Ah, I am glad that such was your experience," he replied, smiling. "I am trying to make soldiers out of them, not merely fighters, but soldiers, as you foreigners understand soldiers. I am trying to get it into their heads that they must have a soldier's sense of honour, which will not permit them to receive money for merely doing their duty."

About eleven o'clock on the last night of my stay in Tai Yuan, I was awakened by a great noise in the street. Men were shouting and running hurriedly about, beating drums and blowing trumpets. Guns and fire-crackers were being discharged at the street-corners, and pandemonium seemed to have been let loose. Knowing that under normal conditions a Chinese town is always exceptionally quiet at night, I realised that something unusual must have happened. With visions of Boxers and other troubles, I dressed hurriedly and rushed into the court-yard, where I found the entire household assembled, with the missionary in the centre of the group.

He pointed to the moon, the edge of which was darkened by an eclipse. He explained to me that according to Chinese astronomy an eclipse is caused by a dragon eating the moon. The citizens were making a noise for the purpose of frightening the dragon so that he would let the moon alone. The missionary then gave a very clear exposition of the real cause of eclipses, and drew imaginary rings on the court-yard pavement to show the relative position of the sun and moon and earth. Among his listeners was Wang, who looked very grave while the explanation was in progress, and apparently grasped it completely.

"You understand it, do you?" the missionary asked my interpreter as he concluded.

"Oh, yes, sir," he replied. "They teach the same thing in the Jesuit school."

By and by, the eclipse passed away and the city became silent again.

On the following evening we were at the little town of Su Kou, thirty miles south of Tai Yuan, on the road to Sian. At the close of a hard day's ride Wang and I were seated at the door of the kung kwan. In the cloudless sky the unblemished moon was once more looking down peacefully on the race which it has known for more generations than any other of the children of men. Wang looked at it and for some time contemplated it in silence. Then he said: "I think, master, that the dragon eat so much of the moon in Tai Yuan that

he is now satisfied. He will leave the moon alone now, and he will eat other things. Do you not think so, sir?" I replied that I hoped only that the dragon would not suffer from dyspepsia.

CHAPTER VII

THE LAND OF YAU AND SHUN

ON our side of the world we are disposed to regard John Chinaman as an isolated, distinct type, who is always the same—crafty, imperturbable, and "heathen"—described by some worthy persons as "more like a toad than a human being." But even a casual observation of the "toads" in their own country cannot fail to impress anyone with the fact that there is really no such thing as a general Chinese type. To be sure, all Chinamen wear queues. The principles of their language are the same, and they all believe in the wisdom of Confucius; but, racially, as well as in speech, customs, and habits of thought, the inhabitants of two adjacent provinces are often quite as different as are Englishmen and Scotchmen. In Chili, traces of the Tartar are everywhere apparent. The people are more slender, and their skin is much whiter than in other parts of China. The inhabitants of the Southwest, especially in the province of Sichuan, give evidence of racial contact with India. The Sichuanese are short and thick-set, and have dark-brown complexions. In appearance they closely resemble the Ghoorkas of the Himalayan foothills. Their temperament has

far less of reserve and dignity than has that of their neighbours of the North.

In Central and Southern Shansi, in the valley of the Yellow River and of its tributaries, live another people. They are taller than the Sichuanese, without the regular features of the Tartar. Their skins are unmistakably yellow. Their noses are small and their lips rather thick. They are of the original Chinese stock, although their lineage is not so direct as is the case with the inhabitants of southern Shensi, of whom I shall speak later. The men of Shansi are taciturn, industrious, and methodical. They have neither the traditional fondness for war and governing that are the heritage of the Manchus, nor the light-hearted gaiety of the Sichuanese. They are devoted to their homes; they travel as little as possible to other parts of the Empire; they are content to reap small harvests from oft-tilled fields. Perhaps it is their constant closeness to nature that makes them worship spirits in trees and rocks more frequently and fervently than the people of the plain. The dress of the people of Shansi differs in some details from that worn in other provinces. The men button their blouses on the left side instead of the right, and, although the women bind their feet, they frequently wear over them high top-boots with long, pointed toes, similar to those found in portraits of cavaliers of the time of Charles II. The language of Shansi, too, is a distinct dialect, not very unlike that of Chili, but entirely

different from the speech of Shensi or Western Honan.

It was into this different China that I plunged on leaving Tai Yuan, with a new wen shao and another escort of soldiers. In the seventeen days' journey of four hundred and fifty miles from Tai Yuan to Sian I met four white men. They were missionaries, who wore the native costume. From Pekin the signs of any knowledge of the ways and methods of the outer world grow fewer and fewer as one approaches Shansi, and after leaving Tai Yuan they disappear altogether. It is no longer new China, but the cradle of the Chinese race. The traveller leaves his kung kwan in the morning in a town whose population is perhaps 40,000, he stops for the noon meal in another of 20,000, and rests for the night within the walls of a city containing 50,000 inhabitants, and in all of them he will find local traditions of kings and dynasties that ruled thousands of years ago.

From the beginning of this, the third stage of my journey, I could not fail to notice that the roads and kung kwans were better than any previously encountered. It is true that the change in none of the highways was of a very radical character. They were still essentially Chinese in their construction, or, rather, lack of construction; but some of the holes in the road had been recently filled with stones or the branches of trees, and there was no part of the entire journey through Shansi that was not possible

for a cart. The improvements, I learned from the banchaiti at our first stopping-place, were made to facilitate the flight, or, as he termed it, the progress of the Empress Dowager and Emperor over the same route. For the same reason the kung kwans had all been cleaned and newly furnished, and the majority of them had been freshly papered in red and yellow for the imperial occupancy.

Four days' journey from Tai Yuan is Kiehiu, the strangest city I saw in China. In all the country roundabout the houses are of mud or brick, and none of them is over one story in height, yet the buildings of Kiehiu are all two stories and are invariably of stone. The style of architecture is not in accordance with ordinary Chinese standards, but is strongly suggestive of a German town of the fifteenth century. A portico along the entire front of the second story is reached by a stone stairway which winds up the outside of the building from the court-yard. The roofs are all of tile, and the gables are usually ornamented with images of dragons and birds. North and south through Kiehiu runs the main highway of Shansi. It serves as the principal street of the town, and is its only real thoroughfare. All the other streets are alleys about ten feet wide that twist and wind for miles in every direction, making of the city a labyrinth of which a minotaur might be proud. In designing the houses, care has apparently been taken to have no windows overlook the alleys, so that in walking

MAIN STREET OF KIEHIU.

through them one sees nothing but two blank walls.

Accompanied by a soldier of my escort I started on a little tour of exploration of the town. Leaving the kung kwan we struck off into one of the alleys and followed it continuously for about half an hour, when we suddenly emerged at our starting-point. My guide told me that we had returned by a different route from the one by which we had entered the labyrinth; such may have been the case, but my walk had certainly given me the impression that I had traversed only one winding alley. The entrances to the houses, too, are a part of the maze. A small gate in the blank wall leads by a passageway into a court-yard, which seems to have been constructed for the express purpose of misleading. The court-yard is usually surrounded by blank walls, through which there seems at first to be no exit other than the passage whence the visitor has entered. At the farther corner the guide presently discovers a small opening that leads into another court-yard containing the house for which he is searching.

No interior Chinese town makes the slightest attempt at lighting its streets at night, and Kiehiu is no exception to the rule. It would be interesting to know how its citizens who attempt to return to their homes after sun-down, succeed in finding their way to their respective court-yards. But the labyrinth is not the result of chance or accident. The

alleys are all arranged in conformity to some plan that existed in the mind of their designer. The passage-ways between the walls never come to an abrupt termination; they always lead somewhere, and I was told that, when the key to their general scheme is once mastered, their intricacies become as plain as the numbered streets on Manhattan Island. What is the reason for the labyrinth? What is its key? Why should the height of the houses and the style of architecture differ from all the rest of Shansi? Kiehiu is a Chinese puzzle.

A spur of the Shansi Mountains crosses the road about one hundred miles south of Kiehiu. The mountains are very steep, and a passage through them is possible only by a narrow defile called Linshi Pass. Although it is not ten miles long it took our little caravan more than four hours to make its way through it. Ahead of us were three carts so heavily loaded that after every quarter of an hour's climbing it was necessary for the mules that drew them to lie down and rest. The road was not sufficiently wide to permit us to pass the struggling carts, and, in consequence, our progress could be no more rapid than theirs. It seemed as if I had never experienced a worse road than the one through Linshi, and it was surprising to hear the shi jang say that it was in remarkably good condition. He explained that, to mitigate its discomforts, five thousand soldiers had worked for two weeks in repairing it before the Empress Dowager

and her step-son passed over it on their way to Sian. Poor Kwang Su. If the condition of Linshi, as I found it, was the best his subjects could do for him, the jolts on his road to exile must have caused his head quite as much uneasiness as did ever his crown in Pekin.

Yet the difficulties of Linshi constitute one of the three barriers that, if properly defended, would make Sian almost inaccessible from the outer world, and a knowledge of these may have been one of the reasons why the capital of Shensi was selected as a city of refuge. From the coast Sian can be reached by three routes. The one from the east across the province of Honan passes through Tung Kwan, the Gibraltar of the Yellow River. The only way to Sian from Hankow and the south is through the mountain-wilderness of Southern Shensi, where there are no roads, worthy the name, and where many of the trails would be impassable for artillery trains or commissary waggons. The road from the north is guarded by Linshi Pass. Until railroads have gridironed the Middle Kingdom, no Emperor of China that takes refuge in Sian is in danger of having his exile disturbed, however great the eagerness of his enemies.

Half way between Tai Yuan and the borders of Shensi is Ping Yang, the capital of China during its Saturnian age. Like other ancient nations, The Black-Haired people love to tell of a time, peaceful and perfect, with which they constantly compare

the troubles of the present as they long vainly for its return. This period was far back near the starting-point of Chinese history, during the reigns of Yau and Shun 2356 to 2205 B.C., two hundred years before the birth of Abraham. Yau and Shun were later idealised by Confucius, and are to-day reverenced everywhere in the Empire as its two greatest heroes. Their beneficence and goodness had an effect even on the elements. The wind always blew softly, and once in every fortnight there was a shower of rain. Everyone was honest. There were no thieves, and greed and covetousness were unknown. Yau is said to have been more than ten feet in height. He reigned one hundred and two years, and was succeeded by his son-in-law Shun. "The sky rained gold in those days." There were no Boxers or missionaries or opium; it was a serene, happy period, whose memory, after four thousand years, China still fondly cherishes. Yau and Shun set up their capital in Ping Yang. According to Chinese story, one of the last acts of Shun's life was to make a pilgrimage to the five sacred mountains of the Empire. On his return to Ping Yang he offered sacrifices to his ancestors * in a temple that he had founded.

This temple, the Chinese say, was about three miles south of Ping Yang, on the site of the present temple of Yau and Shun, which is to-day one of the most famous places of worship in the Em-

* MacGowan's History of China, page 16.

TO THE MARKET AT PING YANG.

A SHANSI MILL.

pire. A temple of some sort is said to have existed on the spot ever since Shun's time. The present edifice was recently enlarged and almost rebuilt by order of the reigning emperor Kwang Su, who worshipped at its altar while on his way to Sian. The grounds cover about ten acres, inclosed by a high brick wall. Around the temple are tablets to kings of the early dynasties, but the usual shrines with their painted idols are conspicuously absent. The temple stands in the centre of the inclosure. It is a one-story building, about sixty feet in height. In a vestibule are two heroic statues of Yau and Shun, that reach from floor to ceiling. They are painted blue and red and yellow; in their physiognomy there is no evidence of the serenity of soul with which they are accredited. Their expressions are decidedly unhappy, and their heads are thrown forward at an angle which gives them the appearance of trying to scowl at any admirers of subsequent generations bold enough to look up at them. In the centre of the temple, on a high table, is a stone tablet in honor of the two hero-kings, but, as in the yard outside, there are no idols. Yau and Shun lived long before China became inoculated with Buddhism. They worshipped their ancestors and Shang Ti, king of Heaven. Only the emperor in Pekin is now privileged to offer sacrifices to Shang Ti, so that many centuries have elapsed since the "One and Supreme God" was worshipped in Ping Yang. The temple is now consecrated only to the

memory of its founders, but it is still not profaned by "images made with hands."

The city of Ping Yang gives evidence of its age and of its former importance. Its black walls are massive even for a Chinese town. They inclose an enormous area, only part of which is occupied by the dwindled population of the city. The part not covered with houses and streets is divided into small farms like those in the surrounding country. In the gates of Ping Yang there is a curious arrangement of walls that proves an ancient knowledge of fortification that would do credit to a modern engineer of Europe or America. The gateway bastions are circular; in size and appearance they are not unlike an American locomotive round-house. Entering by a passage through the centre, one passes into a stone-paved street that is completely shut in by two parallel rows of high walls. The street winds between them for almost half a mile before it passes through a similar bastion into the city. The arrangement would seem to make Ping Yang almost impregnable to any attacking force not provided with heavy artillery or dynamite. Even should an army succeed in forcing the outer gate, it could be annihilated while passing through the narrow street, by missiles hurled from the tops of the walls inclosing it.

While riding through the streets of Ping Yang, I came upon what at first seemed to be a mandarin and his escort on their way through the city. But the sedan chair was larger than usual and had about

twice the ordinary number of bearers. They walked slowly, as though their burden were a heavy one, and they frequently wiped their perspiring faces with the sleeves of their blouses. Almost everyone prostrated himself in the dusty road as the chair approached, and remained in that position until it had passed. Curious to see who this much-honoured mandarin might be, I reined up in the shadow of a wall and stared through the uplifted curtains of the chair. Within it sat not a human being, but a huge idol. He or she or it (for the gender of idols is somewhat indeterminate) wore mandarin-robes and a velvet cap. The hideous, painted face of the thing in the chair wore the mocking leer that is an idol's prerogative. It seemed as if the idol were exulting in ghoulish delight at its success in deceiving, and as if it were mocking the prostrate men and women who had souls. Processions of this kind are common in the interior towns of Shansi and Shensi. It is the duty of the mandarin to see that all the idols in his district are made as comfortable as possible. A well-regulated idol is supposed to grow weary of spending its entire time in a musty temple and to find the labour of foretelling good or bad luck for the townspeople a trifle monotonous; to keep it in good spirits, it is taken out for an occasional airing and is paraded through the principal streets. The outing is supposed to restore the idol's equanimity and to make it content to dole out good luck for some time to come.

In every other manifestation of superstition or religion that I encountered in China there seemed to be at least a spark from the divinely implanted universal soul. The dragon eating the moon was the world-old allegory of the eternal struggle between light and darkness, between good and evil. Much of the image-worship of the temples could be explained as only a system of fixing the worshippers' attention on the unseen god or spirit that the image represented, and could no more be properly called idolatry than a Romanist's adoration at a shrine of the Virgin; but in the idol-procession in the streets of Ping Yang there was no allegory and no soul. It was only the sodden worship of a piece of painted wood which, for a race and a people that once produced a Confucius, was pitiful and saddening. After I had seen it, I no longer wondered why old Yau and Shun, in the vestibule of their imageless temple, looked weary and worried.

CHAPTER VIII

WHERE GENGHIS KHAN FAILED

AT Ping Yang we came into the valley of the Fen Hoa, one of the larger tributaries of the Yellow River. For a considerable distance the road ran along the banks of the river, at times crossing rich bottom lands and at others skirting high clay cliffs. On promontories where the river wound among the hills we saw a number of pagodas. Few pagodas are less than twelve stories in height, and some have as many as sixteen or eighteen stories. They are octagonal in shape, the base sometimes covering two acres. The perimeter of each successive story is less than the one below it, so that when viewed from a distance the entire structure has very much the appearance of a huge obelisk. Pagodas are not, as is sometimes supposed, places of worship, although they are often by the side of temples and are in charge of priests. They are more in the nature of monuments commemorating some sage or especially virtuous man.

The country over which we were now travelling was the scene of the campaigns of Genghis Khan in his wars for the conquest of China. While Genghis was busy in subduing the Mohammedan king-

doms of Western Asia, he sent his general, Mau Hoa Li, to invade Northern Shansi. During the four years following 1218 the Mongols pillaged and massacred and burned until the Fen Hoa valley was reduced to a desert. Genghis took command later in person and was leading an army toward Honan, when he died in Luh-pan, in Shensi, in 1227. His son, Okkodai, continued the war, and in 1231 fought his way through Shansi on his way to the capital in Kai Feng. It is a commentary on the valour and resourcefulness of the men of Shansi and Shensi of those days that, although China was the first country invaded by Genghis Khan and was the country whose throne he seemed always most to covet, it was the only kingdom which the great Mongol never conquered.

From their position the two old yellow provinces bore the brunt of the fighting. Their people perished by thousands in defence of their homes. Their fields were laid waste and their cities burned, yet, with the dogged, patient, never-say-die obstinacy that has always characterised the old Chinese stock, they fought on. They were not able to drive back the invaders, but they succeeded in so harassing the Mongol armies that by the time they had reached the Yellow River they were no longer strong enough to conquer the country to the southward. Forty kingdoms of Asia and Europe fell beneath the tramp of the Mongol horses of Genghis, but Shansi and Shensi never surrendered.

They succeeded in keeping up the struggle until nearly sixty years after the death of Genghis, when his grandson, Kublai Khan, was proclaimed Emperor of China and Mongolia. But the years that the Mongols had passed in conquering the Empire had imbued them with a profound admiration of the arts and learning of the Chinese. Even more than some of the native emperors who had preceded him, Kublai did all in his power to keep undefiled by foreign contact the system of Fuhi and the wisdom of Confucius. He gave to the dynasty that he founded a Chinese name, Yuan, and adopted the dress, language, customs, and religion of his subjects. In its permanent results the triumph of the Mongol was really a victory of the vanquished. It meant the absorption of the wild barbarians of the North into the expanding civilisation of the people they had conquered.

In sad contrast with the men of Shansi who so long kept Genghis at bay are the soldiers one finds in the province to-day. Ping Yang is the headquarters of a brigade. From the general who commanded it I procured one of the relays of my escort. In detailing them he very graciously gave assurance that they were six of his best soldiers. They were friendly and well disposed, but they all smoked opium to such an extent that they had to be dragged from their brick beds in the morning, and they fell asleep in their saddles so frequently that I momentarily expected to see them fall from their ponies.

Four of the six carried no other weapons than broadswords, slung across their backs. The other two were armed with Mauser rifles of an ancient pattern, but not one of the party possessed a cartridge-belt. While riding through the fields one morning we saw a large eagle calmly perched on a rock, less than a hundred yards away. It was so superb a shot that I was not surprised to see one of the soldiers dismount and open the breech of his rifle. He walked up to the only other member of the party similarly armed, and the two held an animated, though subdued, colloquy. It ended by the second soldier climbing down from his pony and unstrapping his pooka. He spread it on the ground, and after some fumbling he drew from its recesses a canvas sack; this he untied and from it extracted a cartridge, which he handed to his comrade. The process of discovering the cartridge had consumed fully five minutes, and by the time it was loaded in the breech, ready to fire, the eagle was only a speck against the blue sky, far out of range. Without a sign of the slightest impatience the owner of the solitary cartridge laboriously tied up his pooka again and strapped it once more on his saddle.

On the way through Shansi I met several regiments of soldiers returning from the scene of the Boxer uprising in the north to their homes or garrisons in other parts of the country. None of them were more modern in their methods or equipment than the six who accompanied me. Some of the

soldiers had rifles of various kinds, but cartridges were few and far between. In fact, ammunition hardly seemed to be regarded as necessary to the effectiveness of a weapon; western-made fire-arms are as yet such a novelty in the interior of China that they are supposed to be of themselves ample means of defence without the aid of powder or bullet. Chinese soldiers on the march look like the chorus of a burlesque-opera at its first rehearsal. Their uniforms are, I believe, more picturesque than those of any other army in the world. Their tunics are red, or purple, or yellow, bordered in front in white cloth into odd designs, while on the back are Buddhist emblems and the names of the regiment to which their wearers belong; their turbans and baggy trousers are black. Without the slightest attempt at marching order they straggle along the road, sometimes in single file and sometimes by twos and threes. They are often left to their own devices by their officers, who ride a mile or two ahead of the men they command. Along the banks of the Fen Hoa I was joined one day by a young captain whose company were trailing somewhere behind. He was a tall, handsome man, who made a notably fine figure on horseback. He at once began a conversation by remarking that, although we had travelled a long distance, he had probably seen more of the earth's surface than any member of our party. "I have been all over the world," he said. "I have seen Mongolia on the north and Tibet on the west;

I have seen the ocean at Hong Kong and Shanghai. These places are near the edge of the world. One cannot go much farther in any direction."

But, simple as the Chinese soldier is, he has many good points. He is patient, strong, and capable of enduring great fatigue. He can live on a few bowls of rice a day, and he never complains. Like the rest of his race, he is always cool and self-possessed, and would doubtless be slow to run away from danger. To be sure, he is mortally afraid of devils and the spirits of his ancestors, but this should act only as an incentive for him to do his duty faithfully in order to escape their wrath. From what I have seen of soldiers in Shansi I am convinced that if they could be induced to leave opium alone and if they were properly armed and disciplined, they would fight as well as their ancestors did in the days of Genghis Khan. The Chinese themselves apparently realise the weakness of their army far better than they do other faults of their system. The only innovations in which the people of the interior seemed to me to take any real interest were those which had to do with military affairs.

Ever since their crushing defeat in the war with Japan, changes in army methods have been in progress. Although slow in their development, the changes are radical, and contemplate nothing less than the complete re-organisation of the vast military forces of the empire. Manchus, in the eighteen

provinces, who for centuries have been supported by the government as a militia reserve, are now compelled to be proficient with the rifle instead of the cross-bow and broad-sword in order to receive their pensions. As the result of a series of Imperial edicts, a military college has been established during the last two years in the capital of every province. Students are admitted by appointment of the governor much after the way that some West Point cadets are appointed by the President. They are instructed in European tactics and in the use of modern fire-arms, with a view to their becoming officers. At least, such is the theory on which the colleges were instituted. Away from the coast the plan is not yet realised because of the difficulty in obtaining foreign educated teachers. Under the old régime all soldiers in the interior provinces were in charge of the mandarin of the district where they happened to be stationed. They were under his orders, and he was held responsible for their drill and knowledge of arms. As the mandarin was a purely civil functionary, he usually knew almost nothing of military matters, and consequently allowed the discipline of the soldiers under his command to grow very lax. Civil and military affairs are now separated by the appointing of officers of the army as military mandarins to command in every district where there is a detachment of soldiers. The military mandarin has full charge of everything connected with the army, and he has equal rank with the civil mandarin, who is now

relieved of authority over the soldiers in his district.

An original theory of night-watchmen is one of the peculiarities of Shansi. In that province it is not the aim of a guardian of the peace to keep away thieves and marauders, so that the man he is protecting may rest securely and without thought of danger. On the contrary, a watchman's constant effort is to prevent his charge from sleeping too soundly, so that he may be able to rise quickly and fight any sudden intruders. For this purpose the watchman carries a piece of hollow bamboo, on which he beats under the window with a short stick every half hour. A description of this apparatus may not convey the idea of its formidable character, but when one is awakened by it from a sound sleep after a hard day's ride its horrors begin to be realised. An especially zealous and faithful watchman is not content with making a racket at regular intervals. He continues rapping his piece of bamboo until the man he is guarding makes some outcry, showing that he has been successfully awakened. A watchman was included in the ménage of only some of the kung kwans where I stayed. Had he been a member of all of them, sleep in Shansi would have been for me an impossibility.

In Tai Yuan I had purchased a pony. He proved to be the best horse I rode anywhere in China. But after eight days of continuous travel he failed from sheer exhaustion, and by the time we

had reached Heo Mah, fifty miles south of Ping Yang, he was unable to go farther. He was suffering only from fatigue and needed three or four days' rest, which I was unable to give him. His drooping condition was commented on by the soldiers of my escort, all of whom expressed their sympathy that so fine a pony could no longer be of service. When we arrived at the kung kwan the soldiers went to report to the military mandarin of the place while the pony lay down in front of his manger and went to sleep. He was still lying there when the military mandarin passed through the court-yard on his way to see me. I was somewhat surprised at his visit, because I had no business to transact with him, and all calls of a purely friendly character had up to this time been made by the civil mandarins. My visitor began by making a kow-tow and asking if there were anything that any human being in Heo Mah could do that would add to my comfort or happiness.

I replied that I would avail myself of his kind offer by asking one favour. "My wen shao," I said, "calls for four public ponies. Heretofore I have used only one, but now that my own horse is exhausted I shall have to ask for another." His face brightened greatly at this, and he at once asked whether I did not want his pony. "What is your price for him?" I inquired. He said that he had no intention of selling him, but begged that I would accept his pony as a gift. He grew enthusiastic in his expressions of unbounded admiration for me; he bumped

his head on the floor and pressed his hands on his stomach. I tried my best to induce him to accept pay for his pony, but he absolutely refused, and I finally accepted. I thanked him in my best style and gave him my last handful of cigars, which he said he would keep as long as he lived as a remembrance of me. I think it likely that he may have kept his promise in this regard, because I am certain that he had never seen a cigar before. As the military mandarin rose to go, he asked whether I intended to leave my pony in Heo Mah. When I replied in the affirmative, he said quickly, "Then I will exchange saddles now; I will leave my pony here and take yours with me." He did so and he and my drooping pony disappeared together.

I was surprised to find that my feelings of gratitude to the military mandarin were not shared by Wang, who had been the medium of our conversation. He looked worried about the whole transaction and said, "This is funny thing. He have got politeness for you too quick, sir." When I came to inspect my new gift-horse for the morning's start I saw why the military mandarin had been generous. All four of the pony's knees were sprung. His ribs could be counted from across the court-yard and all over his body his joints protruded like hat-hooks. My visitor of the night before, learning from my soldiers of the condition of my pony, had taken this means of making an exchange after dark, by which he had obtained one of the best horses in Shansi,

and to me had been left an animated bag of bones. With a wish that David Harum could have met the military mandarin, I mounted my new horse, and after a day's vigorous kicking and urging I succeeded in getting him to Wenhi, our next stopping-place. Fifteen minutes after our arrival the shi jang came up and said he wished to speak with me. "He say he have bad news," Wang interpreted, "but it is on his heart and he must tell."

I replied that I had nerved myself to hear the worst, and told him to speak on.

"He think that your pony have disease. He believe that it will die soon. He say it is no good."

"I am quite sure that your opinions on the subject are correct," I said, addressing the shi jang, and then I went into the court-yard and looked at the pony. He was the most melancholy thing I had seen in Shansi. His head hung down and he was sniffing the dust. His front-knees were half bent as though he were too tired to stand up and too disgusted to lie down.

For a time we all surveyed him in silence; then Wang said, "Maybe the banchaiti can sell it. The feet and the skin is good, and poor mens can eat the meat of it."

I immediately accepted the suggestion and told the banchaiti to try to sell the dying gift. He succeeded in doing so. After deducting his commission I realised as the net amount of the sale four taels ($2.80). As Wang weighed the lumps of sil-

ver he remarked very seriously, "The military mandarin is only young man, sir."

"Yes," I assented.

"He is such a young man and yet such a clever man that by-and-by he will be a general," added Wang.

All the rest of the way to Sian I rode one of the public ponies, called for by my wen shao. They were most willingly given by the mandarins of the shens through which we passed, and I was never allowed to pay anything for them beyond a cumshaw to the mafu. So, after all, I have no ground for complaint on the question of ponies, and I sincerely hope that Wang's prophecy may be fulfilled and that the military mandarin may some day command thousands of men in yellow and purple uniforms. But it would be a source of great satisfaction to me if I could know that in the hour of his triumph he rode to his first review on a thick-necked, red, little pony whose mane and tail had never been combed and who could be induced to singlefoot by a kick high up on his left flank.

At Wenhi we left the fertile river-valley and struck across a dry, rolling, clay plain. The heavy white dust and parched fields proved that we were approaching the famine-country. The corn and millet were only about one-quarter as high as they should have been at that season of the year, and even the poppy-plants looked wilted and sickly. In a number of villages we passed under yellow

WHERE ONCE WAS A RIVER.

streamers hung across the road inscribed with prayers to the gods for rain. The drought that had caused the terrible famine in Shensi had been equally long-continued in Southern Shansi, but while Shensi was starving, Shansi was able to get food from the perpetually fertile valley of the Fen Hoa.

On the fourth day after leaving Wenhi we were riding one afternoon through a sunken road, whose banks rose so high that we were completely shut in from a view of the surrounding country. The road suddenly turned sharply to the right and went down a steep decline. A few minutes later we emerged on the sandy beach of the Yellow River. A mile across its sluggish, muddy current the black mountainous cliffs of the farther shore rose steep and lowering from the water's edge, crowned at their summit by the walls and battlements of Tung Kwan—Tung Kwan that for centuries has held the road to Sian, Tung Kwan that Genghis Khan could never storm; there it was still, old, gray, impregnable, looking down on the original river of China. The shi jang pointed to it and said, "That is Shensi."

CHAPTER IX

TUNG KWAN AND THE ORIGINAL RIVER

IN his first campaign for the conquest of China, Genghis Khan sent ten thousand men under a general named San-kau-pa-tu to take the city of Kai Feng, in Honan, which was at that time the capital of the Empire. After some hard fighting in Shansi the army reached the Yellow River. From some point on the north shore, probably very near to the strip of sand on which we emerged from the sunken road, the wild Mongols looked on Tung Kwan. They belonged to a race who were the world-conquerors of their time, but they realised that they could not pass the city on the opposite height. The plan of a direct advance on Kai Feng was abandoned, and San-kau-pa-tu made a long detour through the mountains of Southern Shensi. His men were so exhausted by the difficulties of the journey that before reaching the capital, they were easily defeated and driven back across the Yellow River.

No one who sees Tung Kwan to-day can wonder why the soldiers of Genghis gave up the idea of taking it. Although it is in Shensi, the city is so close to the boundaries of Honan and Shansi that it is the key to all three provinces. The only ap-

CROSSING THE YELLOW RIVER AT TUNG KWAN.

proach to the huge stone citadel is a broad road that winds up the side of the mountain from the water's edge; on one side, the road is protected by a stone wall, and on the other by a series of stone forts. The business portion of Tung Kwan is below the citadel, on the Shensi side of the mountain. The ferry on which we crossed the Yellow River was a huge scow with a mast at one end. The old sail which beat against it was furled and showed little sign of use; the propelling power was confined to the poles and oars of the boatmen. At first sight of the ferry I wondered how all of our belongings could be dragged aboard. On the beach where we stood there was no pier or landing-place, and to force our cart over the oozing sand appeared to be an almost impossible task. The boatmen laid planks from the scow's edge to the shore, and up these the ponies were led. Then the planks were spread to meet the cart-wheels; a boatman got between the shafts, while the remainder of the party, soldiers, cartmen, and mafu put their shoulders to the rear of the cart, and, with a vast amount of shouting and shoving, succeeded in forcing it up on the scow. The advent of our party left so very little room for the other passengers that several of them were compelled to seek quarters between the ponies' legs. After three-quarters of an hour, our cart, ponies, and ourselves were unloaded on the Shensi shore and were led through the principal street of the town to our kung kwan.

Here I found awaiting me a little man with a shiny, smiling face and small, piercing eyes. He announced that he was a Wei Wen of the governor of Shensi, and displayed His Excellency's card. I subsequently learned that a Wei Wen is a petty mandarin, detailed on a special commission by a provincial governor or a court-official in Pekin. The duty to which the one who met me had been assigned was to officially welcome me to Shensi and personally to conduct me to Sian. When I handed him Prince Ching's card he touched it tenderly, as though afraid of injuring so precious a document. He placed it on the table in front of him, and for some minutes contemplated it in silence. He then made a short speech, in which he told me of his unbounded regard for me. He pressed his hands on his stomach and swore by Confucius that he would protect me with his life. He was so effusive in his demonstrations of admiration that I began to fear that his welcome might be the preface to another horse-trade, but nothing of the kind happened, and I found during the four days in which the Wei Wen directed my travelling affairs that he was a kindly, harmless man whose sole object in life seemed to be to make me as happy as a barbarian could be in Shensi.

Carts with four wheels are the kind most in vogue in Tung Kwan. The carts do not have axles, but the wheels revolve in iron hangers suspended from the four corners of the waggon-box. A pref-

erence for four wheels has come to Tung Kwan from Honan, where a two-wheeled vehicle is seldom seen. The carts I saw in Tung Kwan are an object-lesson in the mistake of generalising in attempting to describe anything Chinese. Customs and methods vary to such an extent in different parts of the Empire that a sweeping declaration about any of them that might be true when confined to some particular province may be inaccurate when applied to the one next to it. I had been told by a foreign resident of Pekin that the Chinese mind was incapable of advancing beyond the idea of two wheels on a vehicle. This I found to be the case in every place through which we passed, with the exception of Tung Kwan, but the exception was so marked that it disproved the rule.

Tung Kwan is near the point where the Yellow River is joined by the Wei Ho, a river that rises in Kansuh, not far from the Tibetan border. The road from Tung Kwan to Sian lies across a plain, which extends from the Wei Ho on the north to the foot-hills of the Shensi Mountains on the south. For more than fifty miles the road is lined on both sides by rows of willow-trees. Their planting was an incident of the Mohammedan rebellion of 1868 to '73.

The people of the Yellow River valleys are so far out of what we call "the world" that some of even the more ponderous histories of the last fifty years in China make only scant mention of this war

that devastated three provinces, cost thousands of lives, and left Shensi helpless and desolate. Because of its nearness to the Mohammedan countries of the west, Shensi numbers among its inhabitants more followers of the Prophet than does perhaps any other of the eighteen provinces. Although their dress and language are the same as those of the people among whom they live, they are not free from the religious fanaticism that has always distinguished men of their faith everywhere. Taking advantage of the disordered state of the Empire after the Taiping rebellion, the Mohammedans of Shensi and Kansuh rose in revolt against the Chinese Government. Their apparent object was to place a follower of the Prophet on the dragon-throne. They never succeeded in accomplishing much south of the Wei Ho, but north of it town after town fell before them ; and men, women, and children were put to the sword. So great was the desolation they wrought, that after the rebellion had been finally suppressed, there were not enough men left in Shensi to till its fields. Immigrants were brought from other provinces by the Government to repopulate the desert left by the war.

One of the curious results of the Mohammedan uprising was the large number of nominal conversions that it was the means of making to Christianity. "Do you believe in Allah or the idols?" was the question the rebels asked of their prisoners. If they answered that they worshipped the idols

they were immediately put to death, but their profession of a belief in Allah usually meant only a brief respite from the same fate, because the next detachment of Imperialist troops that passed that way was sure to kill all apostates from the religions of Confucius or Buddha. In their dilemma, hundreds of wretched men and women professed belief in the Christians' God, whom the Mohammedans did not deny and whose worshippers the Government was not then persecuting. After eight years of most sanguinary warfare Tso Kung Pao, commander of the Imperialist forces, was finally able to put down the rebellion. In his campaigns Tso was often greatly hampered by lack of food and money, as the funds in the Imperial treasury had been sadly depleted. For an entire year he turned his soldiers into farmers, and thus provided a sufficient commissariat to enable him to continue the war. On one occasion, when his men were striking for back-pay, he made them forget their grievances in hard work; he kept his entire army busy in planting the willow-trees that now shade the white, dusty road from Tung Kwan to Sian.

Fifty miles west of Tung Kwan, at the base of the mountain of Hua Shan, is the temple of Hua ih. China has five sacred mountains, and Hua Shan is one of them. The other four are Tai in Shantung, Heng in Hunan, Hang in Shansi, and Sung in Honan. The adoration of the mountains is a survival, in a decadent form, of the monotheism of early

China. There was a time, obscured by the dim myths of their history, when the religion of the Black Haired People was not unlike that of the Hebrew Patriarchs. It was then that they worshipped Shang Ti, the supreme ruler of Heaven, who was an unseen deity, not represented by idols, and never manifested in rocks or trees. Once a year the kings offered sacrifices to him on one of the five mountains that have since become sacred. Why these should have been selected from all the mountains of the empire, is a question not easy to determine. Three of the five are comparatively near Sian. In the course of centuries the worship of Shang Ti became the exclusive prerogative of the Emperor, on the theory that he alone was worthy to address the Supreme Being, although a reactionary tendency to revert to the universal worship of Shang Ti has more than once manifested itself. In A.D. 625, for example, Kau Tsu, an emperor of the T'ang dynasty, disgusted with the corruption of the Buddhist priests, issued an edict permitting his subjects to erect altars to the ruler of Heaven.*

Emperors of China still worship Shang Ti once a year, but no longer on the mountain-tops. "The Temple of Heaven," in the southern part of Pekin, is used for that purpose by the present dynasty. As a substitute for the worship of the One Supreme God, no longer permitted to them, the people of China turned to an adoration of the five sacred

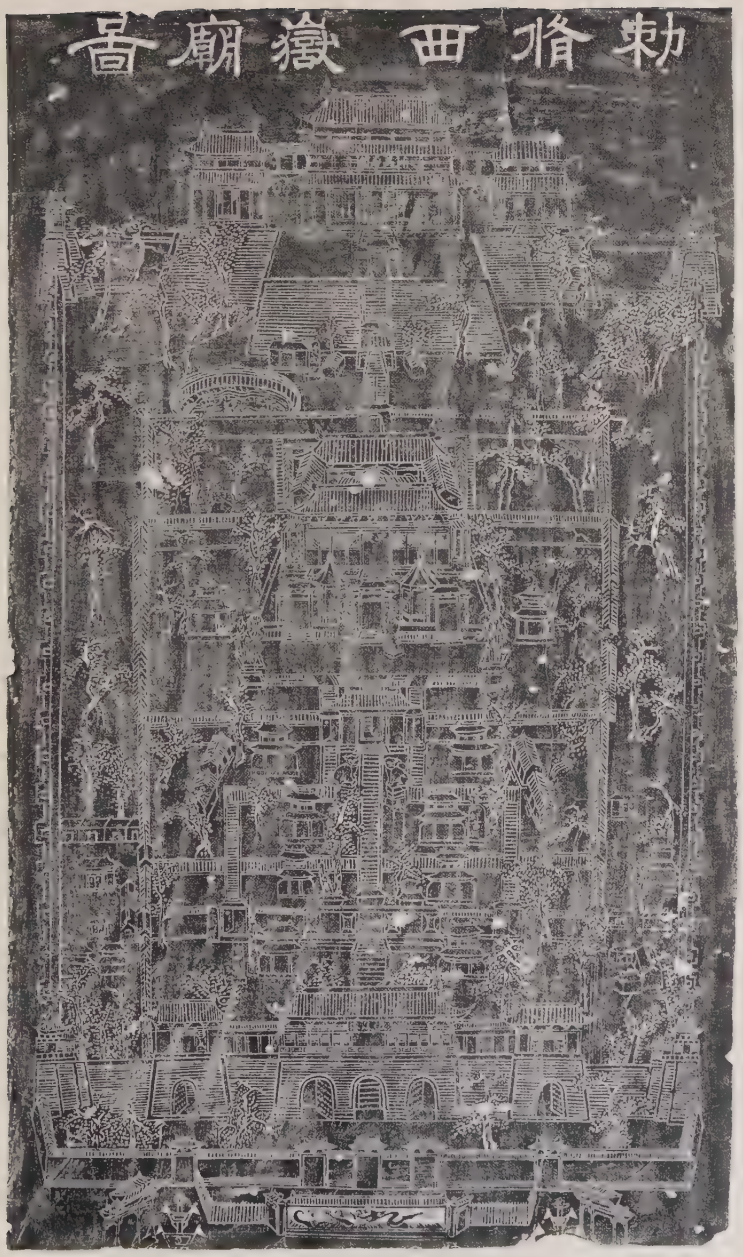
* MacGowan's History of China, page 290.

mountains where once had been "worshipped the Father." They are visited every year by thousands of pilgrims from all over the empire. To defray travelling expenses, co-operative societies are formed in the various provinces, and the men of several adjacent villages make up a special excursion party, by which the cost of the pilgrimage is paid from a common fund. Many of the larger cities, too, contain temples dedicated to the Five Sacred Mountains. The adoration of the mountains is entirely outside of and beyond the three prevailing religious systems. In the long procession of pilgrims who toil wearily up the mountain-trails are an equal proportion of Confucians, Buddhists, and Taoists. The temples at the base and summit where they leave their offerings of cash-strings are not materially different from thousands of other places of worship scattered all over the empire. They contain only idols and tablets, but their especial merit is the fact of their nearness to the cloud-capped mountain-peaks. It is difficult to obtain from a Chinaman a satisfactory explanation of the motive which prompts him to walk hundreds of miles to worship on a mountain-top. About all he will admit on the subject is that the "mountain is a good thing," and, after all, this answer is not very far from the truth. Outside of China, one hears little of the sacred mountains. References to them in descriptions of the land and the people which come to us are not nearly so frequent as to "idolaters" and "Boxers."

The sacred mountain-top is an intermediary between the dusty plain with its idols and its sorrows, and the sky which is the abiding-place of the Eternal. In his soul-groping, the Chinaman gropes upward.

The present temple, or rather the series of temples within the inclosure at Hua ih, are said to have been built by the Emperor Kang Hi about two hundred and fifty years ago. In their arrangement there is a strange commingling of the Confucian and Buddhist faiths. A silent menagerie fills the front of the temple-yard. In rows of heavily barred brick cages are stone images of animals. They are all life-size and are remarkably well executed. Among them are elephants, tigers, and monkeys, whose sculptors must have secured their models a long distance from Shensi, where the originals are not found. The stone animals stand for the Buddhist idea of reincarnation. They are worshipped as sacred, and are supposed, in a vague way, to be endowed with life. It is to prevent them from escaping and running away from their worshippers that the cages have wooden bars in front of them. The priest, who acted as my guide, explained that each supplicant selects an animal to which he addresses his prayers. If they are not answered within a reasonable time, he tries the same prayers on another image, in the hope that its stone heart may prove less hard than the first.

But to me the most curious thing about the stone animals was their position directly in front



PLAN OF THE TEMPLE AT HUA HI.

of a Confucian temple, whose only sacred object was a tablet of the sage to whom it was dedicated. From prostrating themselves before stone dogs and horses, the temple pilgrims turned to this shrine of the greatest atheist the world has ever known. A stone walk led to the rear of the inclosure, where was a Buddhist temple, four stories high, filled with idols. In its construction, this temple, like many of the larger buildings of China, showed a knowledge of the principles which have made twenty-story buildings possible in the United States. The roof and floors of the temple rested upon cross-beams attached to upright poles, the ends of which were sunk in piers of cement embedded in the ground. In Shensi, as in New York, walls are an afterthought. The skeleton of such a building as the temple is always practically completed before the work of inclosing it with walls is begun.

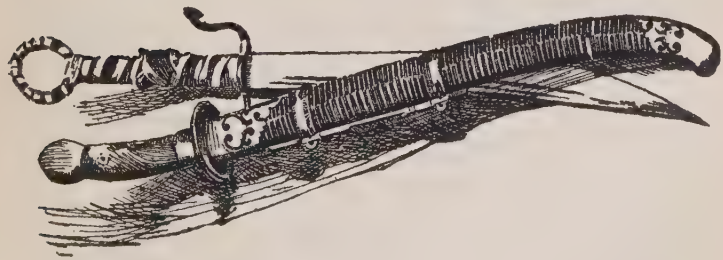
Between the two temples was a pond where fish were fonged, or set at liberty. In its workings the system of fonging animals has very much the effect of a humane society on the western side of the world. On the theory that any of the brute creation may be the dwelling-place of the soul of a former human being, lame and sick animals become the care of the priests; in some of the larger temples special provision is made for caring for sick cats and dogs. To fong an animal of any kind is considered an act of supreme virtue. To obtain good luck, a pious Chinaman will sometimes purchase a live fish and

have a priest fong it. This is done by placing it in the pond reserved for the purpose near the temple. One of the principal sources of revenue to the priests of Hua ih is the sale of rubbings of the inscriptions on the stone tablets scattered throughout the grounds. These are purchased by pilgrims, who hang them on the walls of their homes as a means of keeping away evil spirits.

We left Hua ih in a pouring rain, the first I had encountered anywhere on my travels. During the next twenty-four hours I had an opportunity of seeing what Shensi skies can do, on the very rare occasions when their flood-gates are opened. Within half an hour after the beginning of the storm our party was drenched and drooping. The dusty road of an hour before was transformed into a morass, through which the cart struggled, hub-deep in mud, and in which our ponies, with lowered heads, slipped and floundered. Little rivulets ran down the backs of the soldiers' tunics, causing the red and purple to blend until they looked as though they were made of watered silk; queues became dishevelled and turbans limp as the rain soaked and penetrated. Our objective point as the end of the day's journey was the city of Hua, but the condition of the road prevented our reaching it before darkness set in. We were compelled to spend the night in a wretched little inn in the village of Fu Shin, about ten miles from Hua. The paper pane of the one window in my room was full of holes, through

BUDDHIST TEMPLE AT HUA IH.

which the rain poured in torrents. I called the landlord's attention to it, and he promised to have the window repaired. A dirty boy carrying a saucer of flour-paste presently emerged from the group of dripping mules and horses huddled in the centre of the yard. He began to paste scraps of paper of all sizes and shapes over the holes in the pane, giving it much the appearance of a New England crazy-quilt. When I asked him why he did not tear off the entire tattered sheet of paper and replace it with a new one, he replied "My labor is by the day, but paper costs two cash." As Wang translated this epigram, he thrust the crop of his riding-whip through the paper pane and tore it down. The boy ambled off grumbling at the enforced extravagance, while Wang said, "The Shensi mens is different from Pekin."



CHAPTER X

SHENSI—THE OLD RACE

WHENCE the first Chinese came is a happy, little, hazy problem, about which many historians and ethnologists have guessed and disputed, but which none have solved. But, whatever may have been their starting point, the Chinese were first heard from in the Shensi valleys, through which the Yellow River winds, from Mongolia to its junction with the Wei Ho. It was out of the Yellow River that the original dragon brought to Fuhi the scroll on which were engraved the marks of "the eight permutations," from which have been developed the alphabet of China and its systems of philosophy. Fuhi belongs to the period of legends. According to Chinese traditions, all law and government began with him. He was born ten miles from Sian, and he is said to have begun his reign as first ruler of China in the year 2852 B.C., or forty-seven years before the biblical date of the death of Noah.* The direct descendants of Fuhi's subjects live south of the Wei Ho to-day. Internal wars and foreign invasions have modified and partially obliterated the original race in Northern Shensi,

* According to Professor Legge, the date of Fuhi's accession was 3322 B.C.

but they never have been supplanted in the country between the Wei Ho and the Han. The men of Southern Shensi, of the old blood, constitute another of the distinct types of China. Their skins are yellow, but never sallow. Exposure to the sun has a tendency to turn Shensi complexions red. This fact, in addition to their high cheek-bones and straight features, gives to many of the dwellers in the villages the appearance of North American Indians.

More than any other Chinese I have ever met, the men of Shensi are philosophical and thoughtful; combined with the practical element so noticeable in all Chinese character, they have a love of learning and a refined sense of justice that I have found nowhere else in the Empire. They know their heritage and they are proud of it. They are fond of telling of the events of Fuhi's time as though they had happened yesterday. In speaking of their country's history, they seldom refer to the occurrences of the last fifteen hundred years. To them Mongol conquerors are moderns, in whom they take little interest. The inhabitants of the province of Shensi belong to the old families. Only occasionally do they refer to themselves as "Chinese." They much more frequently use as their prerogative the term Sons of Han, by which they commemorate the days of Shensi's glory, when the first Han dynasty held sway in Sian, two centuries before Christ. The Sons of Han are in-

clined to patronise the inhabitants of other and "newer" parts of the Empire. The Pekinese may dress better and may belong to the smart set at court, but they have been Chinese for only a thousand years; they lack culture; they are hopelessly new.

For Chinese in Shanghai and Hankow who have grown rich by trading with foreigners, there is as much courteous condescension in Shensi as was ever expressed on Beacon Street for Monanta millionaires. Because Pekin is the capital and the residence of the court, the dialect spoken by its citizens approaches more nearly to the official language than does any other vernacular of the Empire. It is the boast of the Pekinese that, in their city, "beggars can speak mandarin." But in Fuhi's country the Pekinese dialect finds little favour. It is provincial and very bad form. It is to be used in addressing a government official but not by gentlemen in conversation. "We speak pure Chinese," an old scholar explained to me in Sian; "we do not pronounce as Tartars do."

Even to my ignorant ears, the difference in dialect was noticeable after leaving Tung Kwan. The sound of aspirated *s* seemed to have been lost in the Yellow River; in its place was a persistent *ch*, which played a prominent part in every sentence. The capital of Shensi was no longer Sian but "Chian," with the accent falling heavily on the last syllable. As might naturally be expected in

the oldest province of China, keen dislike of the foreigner is a characteristic of the Sons of Han. But, with all their prejudices and exclusiveness, they have little of the fanaticism and cruelty which are to be found in some of the other provinces. The foreigner is a barbarian and something of a fool. He should never be allowed to forget that he is an inferior, and anything that he may say or do is worthy of the scorn and contempt of sensible men. But, after all, why should he be taken seriously enough to be regarded as an enemy. To persecute him is only to dignify him. He is harmless though detestable. Let the dog continue to bark at the moon. Shensi has seen many tribes of barbarians come and go since Fuhi's time and they all have ultimately disappeared in the sea of Chinese civilisation. Just give these modern barbarians with short coats time enough and they, too, will share the same fate.

From what I have seen of Shensi character, I believe that it was the prevailing of this sentiment which prevented the bloodshed and murder that marked the Boxer uprising in adjacent provinces. At the outbreak of the storm, Tuan Fang was governor of Shensi. He was a Manchu and a relative of Prince Tuan, the bloodthirsty leader of the anti-foreign party at court. Along with all the other governors, Tuan received the Imperial order to exterminate all foreigners within his province. Boxer sympathisers in Pekin warned him that his head

would be the forfeit if he disobeyed the order. But against this was the advice of the best men among the conservative, tradition-clinging people over whom he ruled. They reminded him that to kill the foreign missionaries would be murder, and that if he, a Confucian, were guilty of that crime an indelible stain would rest upon Shensi. Their advice prevailed and, with superb moral courage, Tuan Fang resolved to save the lives of the missionaries, even at the jeopardy of his own. He assembled the missionaries in Sian and sent them in detachments, under a large armed escort, out of the province to a place of safety on the road to Hankow. In the suddenness of their enforced departure, some of the missionaries were without money for travelling expenses. For these Tuan Fang provided from his own funds. He is now governor of the province of Hupeh and is regarded by all foreigners in China as a hero, and the noblest living Manchu. Such he undoubtedly is, but it is questionable whether he would ever have dared to defy the command of the Manchu Government had he not received the moral support of the people of the old land, that was in its zenith when the Manchus were only a tribe in the northern wilderness.

A Shensi village seldom consists of more than two hundred inhabitants, or forty families, according to Chinese methods of estimating. The only person in the entire community possessed of any authority is the "head man," who is appointed

by the mandarin of the district. The head man carries no badge of authority, but is simply a farmer, like the rest of the villagers. His appointment to office is usually the result of his popularity with his neighbours, who have informed the mandarin of his especial intelligence and virtues. I had always supposed that, under the absolute despotism of the Chinese Government, very little liberty of speech or thought was permitted to its subjects, but I found that in Shensi quite the reverse is the case. In no village is such a thing as a policeman to be found. On the very rare occasions when an arrest is to be made, the head man notifies the Shen Mandarin, who sends one of his servants for the purpose. The villagers seldom give anyone cause for trouble, and, as a result, they are most of the time let alone.

They discuss the topics of the day, talk politics, and gossip about each other's affairs quite as much as is the custom in the United States. In Shensi a tea-house takes the place of the American saloon or country store as a rendezvous and lounging-place. A cup of tea sometimes costs ten cash (a little less than a cent), an exorbitant price, which makes it a luxury, but a cup of hot water for two cash is a popular drink within the means of almost everyone. Over these cups of hot water radical and conservative politics, the faults and merits of the Empress Dowager, and the doings of the "barbarians" are freely discussed along with quotations from the "analects" and the condition of the crops. So long as a man

does not avow an intention of starting a rebellion, he can believe and say what he pleases in Shensi without any more fear of Government interference than in New York. In fact, I found that whenever anyone wished to impress me with a sense of his superior learning and ability, he invariably commented upon the affairs of the Empire. Nor are the inhabitants of Shensi villages so completely without news of the outer world as we are apt to suppose. The Imperial edicts are made public by the mandarins, and the news they contain filters down through the head men to the villagers. It was really exceptional for me to find a banchaiti who did not greet me in the morning with the news of the day, and give me his opinion about it. The banchaiti of the kung kwan of a little town in Shensi was the medium through which I learned of the death of Li Hung Chang. "He was a clever man," said my informant. "He made much money out of China, but there are others just as clever."

In Shensi there is a complete absence of the condition that we call "poverty." Although, relatively speaking, in comparison with the income of the poorest-paid day-labourer in the United States, all Shensi villagers must be accounted poor. The equivalent of twenty American cents is very good pay for a day's work in Shensi, but much less than that sum is sufficient to provide for the needs of a family. In an entire village there may be no house built of other material than mud, but as every fam-

ily owns a home of this kind, and, as no one in the entire community lives in a better house, there is no annoying yearning after "higher and better things." By Shensi roadsides one finds some professional beggars, most of whom are opium-victims, but there are very few "unemployed," except as the result of a universal calamity like a famine or a flood. Shensi farms seldom contain more than three or four acres, but they often remain in the possession of one family for generations. No one ever seems to desire more land or to hold it solely for the purpose of selling it again. The members of each family till their own plot of ground, and from it raise enough food to supply their needs. When the father becomes too old or infirm to work, his sons continue to sow and reap in the same field, and their children follow in their footsteps.

Only a few of the larger villages have shops of any description. Almost everything that the villagers use they make themselves. The care of the cotton-crop is the especial province of the women. They pick the raw cotton, spin it into thread, weave and dye the cloth, and make the clothes of the entire family. The Chinese system of land and agriculture has been described as Utopian by some Western writers on sociology. From what I saw of it, as exemplified in Shensi, I am led to believe that while it has some points in its favour, it is also possessed of decided disadvantages, which have contributed to the present helpless condition of the

country. It enables the huge agricultural population of the empire to live and multiply. It so limits competition that it is hardly possible for any man to be much richer than his fellows. It prevents both idleness and over-production by providing every man with a place where, by his own labour, he can produce only enough for his own needs.

As a result of it, the Sons of Han all work hard and are contented, but they have little ambition and a horror of change. The system offers no incentive to a man who may be disposed "to toil upward in the night while his companions sleep," although there is no danger of the jealousy of "companions" who preferred to stay in bed. The system makes provision only for agriculture, and is, in consequence, a bar to the undertaking of other industries, without which the vast resources of China can never be developed. If a large manufactory, for example, were to be started anywhere in Southern Shensi some of the small farms would have to be appropriated for its site. The owners of the land could not find employment in the factory, because they would have no knowledge of any other trade than farming. They would consequently be deprived of the means of earning a livelihood, and the entire economic conditions of the community in which they live would be disturbed.

The Sons of Han are very dirty, and so are their families and their homes. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that they never bathe. For the

purpose of preserving clothes the women, at rare intervals, soak the family garments in a running stream and then beat them with a stick. As part of a course of medical treatment, a Chinese physician will sometimes prescribe a bath for a patient. These were the only two washing processes that I was able to discover in Southern Shensi. Prejudice against the external use of water is second only to dislike of the foreigner. Soap is unknown, nor can its introduction be expected for many years to come. Shensi boys never "go in swimming." No matter how near they may live to a river they never get into it. Boatmen and ferrymen are sometimes compelled to wade in a stream in order to push their boat when it runs aground, but they always carefully avoid an immersion. But the objection to the external application of water does not lessen its popularity as a beverage. All over Shensi the raw whiskey called, in pigeon English, samshaw, is distilled from a kind of wild corn. There is no tax on its manufacture, and it can be obtained everywhere for a trifling sum. Besides samshaw, a cordial made from rice is sold in the larger towns. But the Sons of Han drink liquor very sparingly. Drunkenness is almost unknown. Missionaries who have lived for years in Shensi have told me that they have never heard of anyone drinking to excess.

Their temperance is all the more to the credit of the people of Shensi because good drinking-water is so hard to obtain. It is perhaps because the soil

has been constantly fertilised for centuries that the well-water is murky and brackish. No one regards it as fit to drink in the condition in which it comes from the ground. It must first be boiled. For this purpose, in the front yard of almost every house, a charcoal fire is kept constantly burning under a kettle filled with water, which is never allowed to cool, but is always drunk hot, just as it comes from the kettle. After I had become accustomed to draughts of boiling water I found them quite as refreshing as any ice-water I had ever tasted on the other side of the world. But if there is no liquor-slavery in Shensi, the opium-curse more than takes its place. Begging by the road-side, sleeping under the shadow of the houses, or moping idly on the benches of the tea-houses, are found the victims of the blight on the land. They are always distinguished by their sallowness and their rags.

To me, the children of Shensi were always charming. The universal love of children for parents and parents for children is the most beautiful trait in the character of the old race. The one thing for which the people of Shensi seem to live is their children. In many of the monotonous lives spent in sowing and reaping the old fields, children are the only light and joy. Ride into any Shensi village about sunset on a summer evening and you will see a father and mother in front of their mud house with their four or five little boys and girls about them, playing, romping, and all laughing and happy

together. A man of Shensi looks upon his child as his companion, and likes to have it with him at all times. In meeting a farmer on his way to market, it is not at all unusual to find that one of his baskets contains his five-year-old child, whose weight balances the load of farm-produce that swings from the other end of the stick on his shoulders. Only on very rare occasions are Shensi children punished or disciplined, and, so far as I could see, they seldom needed it. From their earliest infancy they regard their parents as their best friends. As they grow older they seem to really enjoy "honouring their fathers and their mothers" to a degree that cannot be explained by the existence of laws making filial piety obligatory. The prominent place given to filial piety in Chinese law and religion is, I believe, founded on a natural and reciprocal love and respect for children and parents, which is the peculiar glory of their "heathen" civilisation.

Unlike some children who work in sweat-shops and live in tenement-houses in Christian cities, Shensi children are strong and healthy. Their complexions are ruddy and their eyes bright. They laugh and have the joy of living that is a child's right. They have a simple, trusting manner with strangers. In the democracy of childhood they have not yet acquired the mistrust of foreigners that comes with maturer years. They cuddle up to the traveller from the West, as he rests in a tea-house, and prattle to him with at least the appearance of

being keenly disappointed at his inability to understand them. They are natural and never nervous or "spoiled," although they certainly are not "well brought up." Suspended by a cord around his neck a Shensi child wears a padlock, that is supposed to lock his soul within his body so securely that it cannot be stolen by evil spirits. A child is very proud of his padlock, and always holds it up for your admiration as soon as he makes your acquaintance. Although a child's name is always taken from the "book of surnames," his parents seldom use it in addressing him. They much more often call him by the name of some lower animal like "toad" or "pig." This, too, is to foil the evil spirits, who in their search for children's souls, will not be so readily attracted to a child called "toad," as they would be to one addressed by his real name. Almost from the time a Shensi boy can walk, the top of his head is shaved, and only a small tuft of hair is left as a foundation for a queue.

A girl is allowed to play about with the boys and to have quite as good a time as her brothers until she is about eight years old. At that age the awful process of foot-binding begins, and five or six years are needed to render her feet hopelessly misshapen for life. By the time this is accomplished she is regarded as a woman, and is not allowed to leave her home. In Pekin and other cities where the Manchu influence predominates there is a slight tendency to abandon the cruelties

A LITTLE SON OF HAN.

BY A SHENSI ROADSIDE.

of foot-binding, but in Shensi the custom is universal. For a woman not to have her feet bound and misshapen is almost a disgrace which might prevent her marrying and would certainly result in her being looked upon as "peculiar" to an extent that would make her the object of dislike and ridicule in the village where she lived. It is to be hoped that this, the most barbarous of all Chinese customs, will some day be abolished by law, but until it is Chinese mothers cannot justly be accused of cruelty when they thus torture their daughters. Were any Shensi mother to refrain from subjecting her daughter to the agonies of crippled feet she would be condemning her to a life of humiliation and sorrow and perhaps of disgrace.

Almost every village has a school, to which are sent all the boys under the age of twelve. When a village wishes to establish a school the inhabitants take up a subscription among themselves and hire a teacher. In Shensi, as with us, teaching is a profession. A village would not be apt to engage as the instructor of its children a man not possessed of a degree obtained at some of the public examinations. Rudimentary education, according to Chinese standards, is almost universal in Shensi, and it is really exceptional to find a man who cannot read and write in at least one of the dialects. Almost every boy of ten can repeat chapters of the Confucian analects and a list of the dynasties. Girls are not sent to school. In some of the larger towns a few

men engage tutors to give lessons to the women of their families, but among the farmers it is exceptional to find a woman who has any education beyond a knowledge of weaving, spinning, and household drudgery.

The great event in the life of the people of Shensi is the play which is given once a year in the village-theatre. The stage consists of a brick-platform, covered by a roof, supported on poles. At the back is sometimes a stationary scene on which are painted pictures of dragons and gods. Months in advance a village engages a travelling theatrical company to give a performance. It is paid for by popular subscription, and there are no such things as admission-tickets or reserved seats. The entire population of the village are at liberty to stand around the brick-platform and watch the play, which is usually of an historical character and lasts continuously for five or six days. The daily performance is from ten o'clock in the morning, until five in the afternoon, with a wait at noon of an hour between the two acts. I know of few things on earth that are more jarring and nerve-racking to Western ears than a Shensi theatre. At the back of the stage squat an orchestra armed with kettle-drums and cymbals which they beat and clash at irregular intervals until the din becomes deafening.

In order to make themselves heard above the noise, the actors have to assume a shrill falsetto in reciting their lines that makes one's throat ache

from sympathy, but the audience enjoy the play hugely. Although they never express their applause by hand-clapping, an "Ah-a" of approval frequently sweeps over the crowd. The annual play is also an important social function in the life of the village. It is the only amusement in which the women can participate with propriety, and it thus gives Shensi youths an opportunity of meeting village-maidens whom they see at no other time. The open yard around the theatre is the scene of numerous little flirtations, and is really the only place where anything like love-making is permissible. Chinese marriages are arranged entirely by the parents of the principals, but it sometimes happens in Shensi that a son will tell his father that he would prefer as his wife a certain girl whom he has met at the play, and will request that her parents' consent be obtained to their marriage.

Funerals in Shensi are not accompanied by that show of sadness and depression of spirits which characterises them in the United States. When a Son of Han dies the entire village holds over his body a joyous wake that lasts for several days. As a means of providing the dead man with sufficient money to have a good time in the spirit-world, his friends burn long strings of pieces of tinsel paper, which are supposed to be transformed by the flames into taels. In order that he may have a pony to ride, they make a bonfire of a paper image of a horse, which is believed immediately to assume

spirit form and to find its owner. At the end of about the third day, the funeral procession starts for the cemetery outside of the village. Three or four priests in white robes lead the way, followed by the heavy, wood coffin containing the deceased. Close behind the coffin follow all the men of the village, laughing and talking, and, apparently, keenly enjoying the outing which the funeral gives them. Last of all, in an open cart, are the widow and children of the man who died. They publish their sorrow by a loud howling which often makes a funeral procession heard long before it can be seen. But in the faces of the women there is seldom depicted any sign of grief that is perceptible to Western eyes. As they howl, they sit bolt-upright in the cart, and nod and smile to their friends. In a funeral procession which I saw in a village near the town of Hua the party of feminine mourners was larger than usual. The younger members took turns in desisting from the howling process long enough to lean over the edge of the cart and carry on a sprightly conversation with the young men who walked beside it. The colour of mourning-garments in China would have pleased Mr. Ruskin. Their original colour is white, but as mourners do not wash their clothes more frequently than the rest of the population, the garments of sadness soon take on the colour of the soil of the country and become a dull gray. Among a crowd of Shensi farmers, all dressed in blue or black, the white clothes of a mourner sometimes

give him a ghostly appearance. In riding across a plain after sundown it gives one a sensation of the uncanny to see a widow in white outline against the darkened sky.

Scattered among the villages of Shensi are men who, because of some crime committed in another part of the Empire, are condemned to a life of exile. Although Chinese cities have their jails and prisons, long sentences are seldom imposed on criminals; they are, instead, banished for a term of years to a distant province. The punishment by exile is founded on the theory that it is "never too late to mend," and that it is better to give a man who has "gone wrong" an opportunity of beginning life over again amid new surroundings than it is to compel the community among whom he is disgraced to support him in prison. In accordance with this purely "heathen" idea of giving a bad man "another chance," hundreds of men are every year sentenced to banishment. As Shensi is so remote from the more populous parts of China, it has become the province to which mandarins of the South and East most frequently exile criminals. The sentence of banishment always specifies the Shen where the convicted man must reside. He is sent thither under Government escort and is paroled to the mandarin; should he try to escape during his term of sentence, he will be put to death, but within its boundaries his liberty is no less than that of any other citizen. He can engage in trade or

farming, and is in every way encouraged to lead an upright life. If at the end of two or three years his conduct is such as to obtain the approval of the mandarin, he is allowed to send for his wife and children to join him, but banishment is a sentence imposed only for such crimes as larceny or fraud.

Murder or treason is always punishable with death. In the court-yard of an inn one day I saw a young man leaning against a wall. His feet and hands were manacled, but his expression was exceedingly happy, and he was chatting gaily with a group of cart-drivers about him. I joined the group, and presently asked him, through Wang, what crime he had committed. "I killed a man," was the smiling reply.

"And you are now on your way to exile?"

"Oh no. The Shen Mandarin will cut off my head. Will you let me have two cash for a cup of hot water?"

ON THE WAY TO LOSE HIS HEAD.

CHAPTER XI

MANDARINS AND THEIR METHODS

ABOVE and beyond everything else in the life of Shensi, are the mandarins. To the people of the interior it is not the Emperor in Pekin but the mandarins of the province who are government and law and power. The workings of the mandarin system in Shensi are in no essential respect different from what they are all over the Empire, but as I am writing of the life of the people of Shensi, I include the result of my observation of mandarins and their methods in this brief description of some of the institutions and customs of that province. Chinese government is a progression of personal responsibility. No matter how great may be the power intrusted to an individual, he is always responsible for the results of the execution of his commission or the administration of his office to an official above him, who in turn can be held accountable by some one a degree nearer to the throne. In the interior of China, the functions of government are not, as with us, separated into executive, legislative, and judicial departments. They are all vested in an individual who is supreme and who is held responsible for everything that happens

within his particular sphere of action. The Government of China may be described as a ladder of personal responsibility that extends from the humblest village in the Empire to the dragon-throne in Pekin.

The rounds in the ladder are the mandarins. The mandarin of a Shen or district is responsible for all the villages it includes. A certain number of Shen Mandarins report to each Chau or township mandarin. They in turn are under the orders of the mandarins of the Tings, or sub-prefectures. Ting-mandarins are accountable to the Fu or county-mandarins, whose place in the scale is in the step next below the governor of the province. It is a peculiarity of the system that although the Emperor holds an absolute power of life and death, he very seldom applies it directly to his subjects. An Imperial order affecting an individual is communicated to the governor of the province of which the object of the order is a citizen. Through a Fu Mandarin, the governor starts the order down the line, until it finally reaches the Shen Mandarin, whose duty it is to execute it. But the responsibility resting upon mandarins applies only to results. It has nothing to do with ways or means. The methods which a mandarin may employ in executing an order; his administration of justice, and the general conduct of his office concern no one but himself. Should a mandarin fail to raise the amount of taxes assigned to his district, he would lose his office

and would perhaps be severely punished, but if he wrung the money from the poor farmers by cruelly torturing them no one would interfere. Within his own sphere of action, each mandarin is supreme and independent. Laws and precedents there are, to be sure, but these give only a general trend and direction to his policy. The settlement of every question that may arise within his own jurisdiction is left entirely to the mandarin's own judgment and discretion. He can cut off heads, put men in prison, and do just about as he likes so long as he remains in power.

The governor of each province is practically its king. He can be removed from office at a word from the Emperor. He can be put to death without a trial, and he may, at any time, receive the Imperial "silken cord," commanding him to commit suicide, which, as a mandarin and a man of honour, he is bound to obey, but while he lives and is governor no one of the millions of inhabitants of the province can question his authority for an instant. The government in each stage of the progression expects that the next order below shall be able to cope with all difficulties that may arise within their districts. If a province is invaded by a foreign enemy, it is the business of the governor to raise an army and to drive back the invaders. So long as the war is confined to that particular province, no one outside of it takes much interest in the result; and this is the reason why war may be raging

in a third of the Empire while the business of the other two-thirds will go on as though nothing unusual were happening. If a governor is unable to suppress a rebellion that has broken out in his province, no matter whether he is really to blame or not, he will be disgraced for life, or, as the Chinese would say he will "lose his face," and his death may be the punishment for his misfortune.

Whenever a murder or robbery is committed, it is the duty of the Shen Mandarin to find the guilty man and punish him. Should he fail to do so, he is almost certain to be removed from office. Before a man can become a mandarin he must hold a degree, which he is supposed to have obtained by passing a public examination; but as a matter of fact, in the prevailing state of government corruption, degrees are often obtained through bribery. Mandarins throughout the Empire are appointed by a board in Pekin, usually at the recommendation of a governor or high official. For every position there are at least three or four eligible applicants, and this fact makes the government not at all slow to remove a mandarin whose administration of the affairs in his district has not produced the results for which he is responsible. On the other hand, if a mandarin in a lower grade proves himself to be especially capable and to be possessed of more than ordinary ability he may be promoted to a higher position in the scale. The result of all this is to make a mandarin very desirous of maintaining the

SHENSI MANDARIN AND HIS MUSICIANS.

condition that is described by his countrymen as "Peace."

The Shensi idea of peace differs very materially from the American. Stagnation would perhaps be a better definition of the ideal condition of the Sons of Han. Progress or improvement is absolutely incompatible with it. No matter how fully a mandarin may realise faults in the existing order, he is sure to find himself in trouble if he attempts to change or improve anything. If he repairs a road so as to make it passable for carts, the muleteers whose business is injured are almost certain to come to blows with the carters, and the mandarin is held responsible for bringing on a row in his district. If he shows an interest in Western learning, the anti-foreign element may be aroused, and in the controversy that follows somebody may throw a brick through the window of the mission-chapel. The man next above in the official scale will want to know what it was all about and the mandarin will have to take the blame. So that if a mandarin is wise in his time and generation he will always act on the principle that "whatever is, is right." He will take care to see that his district is in exactly the same condition at the expiration of his term of office that it was at the beginning. His aim will always be to allow nothing to get out of the ruts where it has run for centuries. If he consistently maintains this policy he will be deeply beloved by his people. They will refer to him as a "good" mandarin and

they will rather enjoy seeing him amass a fortune by "squeezing."

The translation of this often-used, pigeon-English word is steal. The motive which makes so many men anxious to become mandarins is not the honour which attaches to the position, but the opportunity it gives them of enriching themselves. Any mandarin of a small township who is clever enough to remain in office for ten or twelve years is almost certain to be rich for the rest of his life. In every shen town in Shensi, the mandarin is invariably the richest member of the community, and neither he nor anyone else attempts to conceal the fact that he has accumulated his wealth by stealing from the public funds. A mandarin's salary from the Imperial Government is a mere pittance, sometimes not a tenth of what he has to spend in the maintenance of his household and his retinue of servants. He makes up the deficiency by helping himself to a share of all the money that passes through his hands. But he does not stop at an amount sufficient only to pay the expenses of his office; he appropriates for himself a surplus that is described in China as the "profits of the mandarin business." As every mandarin is his own county treasurer, assessor, and collector, his facilities for "squeezing" are limited only by the amount of money that his district can produce. He steals openly and with the tacit consent of the Government. The men who compose the Government are

themselves mandarins who share in the "squeeze," so that were the lower mandarins to be honest in their administration, the Government would have to increase their salaries, and as a result there would not be so much squeeze available at the top of the ladder. When an order comes from Pekin for the levy of the annual provincial taxes, the governor adds to the sum demanded a large sum for himself, and then apportions its collection among the Fu Mandarins. They each in turn take a liberal commission and allow the men below them to do the same. As a result, the burden of taxation which falls on the poor farmer is much heavier than it ought to be, but it is no more than it has been in previous years. He pays his share without a murmur, hoping that by doing so he will have "Peace."

"Squeeze" is an integral part of the whole mandarin system. It is the incentive to office-holding which provides the Government with a large number of eligible applicants for mandarin-positions, and is the lubricant which keeps the entire vast machinery running smoothly. As a Shensi man once explained to me, "a mandarin would not be a mandarin if he did not squeeze." But if it were possible to eliminate "squeezing" from mandarin administration, the system could not be said to be without its advantages. In a country like China, the mandarin system insures liberty to the individual and stands between an absolute monarch and the people.

Except in a time of rebellion or disorder, when the appointment of officials with extraordinary powers becomes a necessity, the mandarin is the only person in the district who directly represents the government. All of the subordinate officials, such as clerks of the court, tax-collectors, jailers, and policemen are merely servants of the mandarin. They are hired by him and they are paid from his private funds. They live in or near his residence, and constitute his official family. They are quite as much at his beck and call as are his cooks or chair-carriers. No matter how important and responsible may be the position of a subordinate official, he is never referred to by any other title than "servant of the mandarin." Chief of the "servants" is a man whose duties are a combination of prime-minister and secretary. He is paid a large salary and is the only member of the household whom the mandarin at all regards as an equal. He is privileged to address his master without a preliminary kow-tow, and he can urge the adoption of a measure which he believes to be for the interest of the people of the district. The chief "servant" is usually well advanced in years. He has Confucius and the commentaries at his tongue's end. He is consulted in deciding all vexed questions, and is in charge of the mandarin's correspondence.

The writing of even a short note in conformity with all the requirements of mandarin good form is a formidable undertaking which very few men in a

Shensi town can accomplish successfully. Not only must every letter be written in the official language, a vernacular never used in ordinary conversation, but the ideas expressed in any document that bears the mandarin's signature must never have the appearance of being original with the writer. Everything that the mandarin does or says must appear to be a repetition of the act of some great man who lived hundreds of years ago or a modern application of the wisdom of some ancient sage. Every paragraph in a mandarin's letter usually concludes with a quotation from the classics or a reference to an event in Chinese history, so that no one will suppose for a moment that the mandarin has committed the grave error of doing or saying anything new. The responsibility of eliminating all originality from the official correspondence rests with the chief servant. His success depends upon his ability to clothe all his master's ideas in language that will make them belong to the past.

A mandarin's dress is prescribed by the Government, and for anyone else to imitate it, even in the smallest detail, is a crime, punishable by law. A mandarin wears a round cap, the brim of which turns up in a way that gives it much the appearance of the cover of a saucepan. The top is covered with a kind of rosette of red cord; in the centre is the button, whose colour indicates the rank of the mandarin. His servants are permitted to wear caps of a similar pattern when in the discharge of their

official duties, but under no consideration can they wear a button or decoration of any kind. The long robe which envelops a mandarin from his neck to his ankles is of brown silk. The only ornamentation permitted is a square on the front and back, in which is embroidered a design in gold or silver thread. The sleeves are of extra length in order to conceal his hands. For a mandarin to expose so much as the tip of a finger at a public audience would be a very grave breach of propriety. A mandarin's boots have enormously thick soles. This is to give to their wearer a commanding presence, and to make him appear taller than men of common mould. Whenever a mandarin is officially received by a superior, he wears around his neck a long string of wooden beads. Upon entering the audience-chamber of the man whose rank is higher than his own, the mandarin must drop on one knee, and holding the beads at arm's length from his face must fix his entire attention upon them. It would be a sad day for him if on such an occasion he should allow his eyes to wander for one moment to the floor or the ceiling. The offence would be instantly reported, he would be rebuked, and his "face would be lost" forever.

By the time I had reached Sian, I had met several score of mandarins; it would be hard to find anywhere more delightful or companionable men. I grew to look forward to the half hour passed with a mandarin at my kung kwan as the happiest incident

in the day. I have never talked with a mandarin, whose manner did not indicate a great degree of refinement and cultivation, and who did not possess a certain *savoir faire* that seemed remarkably in accordance with Anglo-Saxon standards. A mandarin is always quiet and dignified. He has none of the effusiveness or gush of the Latin races; he has a sense of humour, he can tell a story well, and his conversation is often interlarded with bits of cynical persiflage which he does not object having answered in kind by a "man from the West." A mandarin is usually adaptable; he can be serious or gay as the occasion demands. He never overwhelms a stranger with politeness, but usually asks, as an American might, "Is there anything I can do for you?" A mandarin must of necessity be well educated, and he is an authority on everything that has to do with the history or monuments of the district over which he rules. Notwithstanding "squeezing," in all transactions with individuals he has a man's sense of honour, and his word once given will surely be kept. Some Shensi towns, too obscure to appear on any map, are ruled by mandarins who in any assemblage in New York would be called "men of the world."

CHAPTER XII

SIAN AND THE SIANESE

"THE Chinese have no sense of beauty," a missionary once explained to me.

The kungkwan where we stayed the last night before reaching Sian was near the Baths of Lintoun. In the side of a hill was a hot sulphur-spring. A stone-cave built over it inclosed a pool about forty feet square. The yellow water had been bubbling up into its rock-hewn bowl while empires on our side of the world had come and gone. An inscription over the entrance to the cave told of its having been repaired by an emperor of China who reigned two thousand years ago. By a system of underground pipes the steaming water was carried about a thousand yards to a hollow on the hillside, where it formed an artificial lake. Its margin was shaded by shrubbery and plants of varieties rare in Shensi. Narrow piers on piles extended from the shore to a series of pavilions in the centre of the lake. A narrow walk connected the pavilions and wound in and out among them. With an exquisite attention to detail, the walks were inclosed by a low balustrade composed of serpentine railings that alternated in a succession of red and blue above the yellow

CAVE OVER THE SULPHUR SPRING—LINTOUN.

water. In designing the pavilions care had evidently been taken that no two of the tiled roofs should be of the same colour. Above the lake labyrinthine paths led up the side of the hill to a little shrine at the top.

When I first saw the lake the sun was dropping into the plain away off in the direction of Sian. As the last light of day fell across the glazed pavilion-roofs, they glinted and flashed for a few minutes and then their colours began to blend. Purple and green and red, all melted into gold, while the mist of yellow steam breathed softly into the bushes on the shore. I watched that play of God-made sunlight and man-made colour until the rising mist met the falling twilight and darkness came. It was then that I remembered that the "Chinese have no sense of beauty." If that hillside with its lake and pavilions had been part of the gardens of a man who had founded a trust or who had consolidated a railroad-system, it is safe to say that we should have heard all about them long ago. We should have been accurately informed as to how much they cost, and we should know where their landscape-gardener "got the idea" which he followed in their design. But Lintoun has not the advantage of being conspicuous. The glinting roofs play with the sunlight that falls on a grey, forgotten land, whose "heathen" people have always scorned the stare of the crowd and who have never worked for praise. To the men and women of the Shensi villages around Lin-

toun it is enough that the cave is on the hillside, and that the yellow mist is forever rising under the shadow of the green and purple pavilions. They love it all as their fathers did before them. They may not know what moderns mean by a "sense of beauty," but the day may come when the West will go to that yellow race in that old grey land and will say, "We are children. Teach us what beauty is."

During the evening that we spent in Lintoun Wang discovered that a few taels of silver which he carried for our daily travelling "cumshaw"-money had been stolen. The carter, Wang said, had seen the money in his possession and he strongly suspected him of being the thief. Although the amount of my loss was very small, I decided, in order to prevent subsequent robberies on a larger scale, not to allow it to go unnoticed. The Wei Wen, accompanied by Wang, went to the inn of the town and there arrested the carter. Together we took the prisoner to the mandarin of the town. By this time it was nearly nine o'clock, and the mandarin would have been justified in expressing annoyance at being disturbed at so late an hour, but instead he only asked politely what I wanted. When I explained to him the cause of our visit, he asked the carter if he had taken the money. Our prisoner fell on his knees and swore by Confucius and several other things that he was innocent. He was so demonstrative in his protestations that I was half inclined to believe him, but the mandarin only smiled blandly

ONE OF THE PAVILIONS—LINTOUN.

and said to one of his servants, "Twenty bamboo." The prisoner's right hand was bound to a cord around his waist and on the open palm the servant struck twenty short cutting blows with a piece of rattan. "Do you still say that you did not steal the bag of taels?" the mandarin asked. The answer was again in the negative, but this time was given much more hesitatingly. "Fifty bamboo." After about the tenth blow of the second series the carter held up his left hand as a signal to stop. He reached in his blouse and drew out the empty canvas sack that had contained the money. With much weeping and howling he explained that the temptation had been too great for him. He had stolen the money and he had spent it. "Put a board around his neck and keep him here for ten days," was his sentence. As our unfortunate carter was led away the mandarin turned to me and said, "I think you will have no more trouble with thieves. But if you should, do not try to settle the case yourself, but report it to the mandarin of the district."

I thanked the mandarin for the trouble he had taken in the matter and rose to go, but he stopped me. "You have met with a loss in my district," he said, "and to that extent I have lost my face to you and to Prince Ching, whose card you carry. I owe you the amount that has been stolen from you." I assured him that he owed me nothing, but that I was under obligations to him; that

the loss was mine and not his, but the mandarin grew quite stern. "I must compel you to accept the amount the carter stole from you." At his direction his secretary weighed out the money, which under the circumstances I could only accept. I have heard of Mott Street Chinamen being held up and robbed by "toughs" on the Bowery, and I believe that some of the thieves have been punished, but I have yet to learn of one such case in which a police-captain refunded to the complainant the amount of his loss. Yes, "The heathen Chinee is peculiar."

The eastern boundary of the Plain of Sian is about two miles to the westward of Lintoun. Near it the mountains veer to the southwest, partially inclosing a level plateau that extends for hundreds of miles northward from Sian. The soil of the plain is a kind of alkali which when well watered can be made very productive, but which in time of drought turns to a fine, white powder, in which nothing can grow. The plain is treeless, and the only vegetation that is natural to it is a coarse grass that grows in rank profusion all over Northern Shensi. A series of small rivers which flow into the Wei Ho zigzag across the plain. The road from Lintoun crosses them on stone-bridges that were once fifteen or twenty feet above the bed of the river, but a continual accretion of mud carried down by the current has so buried the stone pillars on which they rest that the bridges are now only about two feet above the water.

Within a radius of fifty miles from Sian there

is no stone of the kind of which the bridges are built. The cutting of these tons of granite in some distant quarry and their transportation to their present resting-place is only another commentary on the originality of Chinese methods in performing difficult tasks. When I first rode over the plain of Sian, the crops, whose planting had been delayed by drought, were just beginning to appear above the ground, and men and women were at work in the fields. Here and there rose a temple or a mud-village like an island in an ocean. Mile after mile in every direction stretched the level, monotonous plain as far as the eye could reach, without an object to please or interest anywhere—a land that seemed to have been designed by nature for a desert, and that would have been hopeless for any race on earth but the Sons of Han.

On the western horizon I presently noticed what I at first took to be a range of low hills. The crest of the ridge was broken at intervals by sharp peaks, which looked like miniature mountain-tops. As we drew nearer to them a certain angularity and sharpness of outline became visible, which gave me the first suspicion that they might be something else than hills. I called the shijang and pointed to the ridge on the western horizon.

"What is that?" I asked.

"It is Sian," was his reply.

What I had supposed to be hills were in reality the walls of the city we were seeking. The peaks

were the archery towers. Accustomed as I was by this time to Chinese city-walls, I was not prepared for anything so imposing as this environment of Sian. Compared with their great height and excellent condition, the walls of Pekin are straggling and insignificant. Sian's walls are about fifteen miles long. They were rebuilt in their present form in 1368 by the Emperor Hung Wu of the Ming dynasty. At no point is their height less than thirty feet, and near the gates the distance from the ground to the roadway on the top is fully seventy feet. The towers which surmount the walls are enormous structures, each containing four or five stories with sixty or seventy windows through which archers could shoot down at an attacking force advancing on the city from the plain. The walls are an object of pride to the Sianese. In speaking of the points of interest in their city they invariably call a stranger's attention to the walls in much the same way that a Chicagoan might ask, "Have you seen the stock-yards"? With the introduction of improved implements of warfare, and the disappearance of the danger of Mongol invasions, the majority of Chinese cities no longer take as much interest in their walls as formerly, and a tendency is manifest to allow the old defences to fall into a state of dilapidation, but Sian is not modern enough to be afraid of dynamite or "twenty-pounders." Its citizens still pay an enormous tax every year to keep the walls in constant repair. Outside of them are

a series of suburbs, through which we passed in approaching the eastern gate of the city.

Different and strange to each other as are the peoples of the earth, there are points where their civilisations touch and lose their differences. In the wide ocean that separates the East from the West, and the oldest race from the newest, there are a few small islands where men from both continents can meet, and can say: "This little land belongs to our common humanity." We are apt to regard a suburbanite as an ultra-modern product, but when Wang translated the shijang's explanation that "some mens likes to live outside the city wall because land is cheaper and they can go into the shops every day," I found myself wondering how much of a reduction from the regular fare Sian suburbanites obtained by purchasing monthly commutation tickets. Sian suburbs possess many of the elements that might characterise a nearby dependency of New York. Their population is frequently quite large. They have schools and temples, but no shops or market-places. For their shopping the inhabitants must go into town; and Sian suburbanites have travelled back and forth between their homes and their offices every day for the last 5,000 years.

We passed over a bridge across a moat in front of the eastern gate, and entered the city. Our objective point was the residence of Mr. Duncan, British missionary, who had been in charge of the distribution of the American famine-relief-funds.

Our ride to his house gave me an opportunity of obtaining an impression of the size and extent of Sian. For more than three miles we rode through streets that were lined with stores, and banks, and markets. Carts, mandarin's chairs, and men on horseback were making their way in and out among the moving crowds, and everywhere were signs of life and activity. The deeper I had progressed into the hidden part of the Middle Kingdom the more I had become impressed with the fact that it is better in China to do as the Chinese do. Not only had I become a master of chop-sticks, but by a series of purchases on the journey I had acquired a suit of Chinese outer garments in which I always appeared in public. I found that by wearing them I generally saved myself from the curiosity of the people of the towns through which I passed, and I was able to eliminate from conversations with mandarins an inquiry as to why "men from the West insisted on wearing their trousers outside of their boots."

When I rode into Sian, I was enveloped in a long sheep-skin coat, Chinese top-boots, and a fur-lined cap that came down over my forehead, but the Sianese saw through my disguise at once. Men in the street stopped to stare. Women and children appeared at the windows and pointed at me while the soldiers of my escort were kept busy in dispersing the crowd of small boys who followed at my pony's heels. I could not, of course, understand the comments of the crowd, but Wang informed me that "the par-

ents want the children to see what a funny thing the foreign man looks like." Presently the Wei Wen who was acting as our guide dismounted before a low gateway, over which was a pasteboard sign inscribed with the. words, "American kung kwan." In front of the gateway stood a man in Chinese costume. Through his gold-rimmed spectacles his steel-grey eyes looked at me with that sincere kindliness, of which I sometimes think only Scotch eyes are capable.

"Hello, Mr. Duncan," I said, as, stiff and stumbling, I climbed down from my pony. "I have been looking for you for some time."

The merry twinkle behind the spectacles expanded into a hearty laugh as he surveyed my poor attempt at a Chinese appearance. "It's a hard thing for a Yankee to look like a Chinaman," he said, "but I am glad to see you. The governor told me you were getting near the city. I was afraid you might not make it. There are a few Boxers left up the country. Come in. I've a bit of tiffin for you that you can eat with a knife and fork."

Such was my first introduction to the "missionary of Sian," one of those few great-hearted men who do not belong to any race or nation, but to the brotherhood of mankind; whose unseen labours in the hidden places of the earth are knitting the world together. With an Oxford education Mr. Duncan had lived for years in that far-away, vast

city, in order that "some might be saved"; from being regarded as almost a foreign outcast he had come to be adviser of the government, and a power throughout the whole of Shensi.

No one knows when or by whom Sian was founded. From all that I have ever been able to discover on the subject I am led to believe that when Noah was a little boy, Sian was not very different from what it is to-day. Sian was a flourishing town when Fu hi was born, and Fu hi stands at the beginning of Chinese mythical history. Hwang-ti, the "Yellow Emperor," whose reign began in B.C. 2697, made Sian his capital. Hwang-ti invented carts, and bows and arrows, and devised the Chinese calendar. His queen, Lui-tsu, invented silk weaving and is to-day worshipped by all silk-makers as a sort of patron saint. "The Great Yu" is a prominent figure in the early history of Sian. In B.C. 2286 Yu was assigned by the Emperor Yau to the task of stemming an inundation of the Yellow River and the Wei Ho, which had overflowed nearly all of Shensi. "The waters," said Yau, "envelop the mountains and rise higher than the hills. They threaten the heavens so that the people complain." It was eight years before Yu completed his task of turning back the waters into their original channels. He obtained the idea of a drainage-system from the marks on the back of a turtle and divided the country into nine districts, which were subsequently enlarged into provinces. Shensi he called Kuanchung,

THE AMERICAN KUNG KWAN—SIAN.

a name by which it is sometimes known to this day. Wu Wang, who founded the Chow dynasty, reigned in Sian in B.C. 1122. In the days of Wu and his son Chung ambassadors from distant countries brought presents to the "glorious emperors" in Sian. We are told that a king who ruled somewhere in the Malay peninsula sent a "white pheasant," which may be the first record of a White Cochin chicken.

In the reign of Chung or Shih Hwang-ti, B.C. 246, Sian probably reached the zenith of its power and prosperity. Chung has been called the Napoleon of China. He built the Great Wall, cut canals, opened roads, and solidified the scattered provinces which make up the Empire of to-day. In and around Sian, Chung built a series of palaces whose splendour and magnificence has never been rivalled by any of his successors. At one palace at Hein Yang, about twenty miles from Sian, he collected all the furniture and jewels of the kings who had submitted to him. Chung's grave is near Lintoun. From B.C. 206 to A.D. 25 the emperors of the first Han dynasty occupied the dragon throne in Sian. This was China's "Elizabethan age," when arts and literature flourished, when the love of learning which Chung had crushed was revived, and when the thirteen classics of Confucius were cut in stone and were set up in the Hall of Tablets. The first Hans did much to enlarge the Empire. Their armies pushed across Central Asia to the Caspian

and brought back to Sian stories of the Romans, who lived to the westward, "who are simple and upright, and who never have two prices for their goods."* By a strange coincidence the Emperor who ruled in Sian at the time of the birth of Christ was Ping ti, which means the "Emperor of Peace."

Sian was captured and burned by Kwang Wu Ti, of the second Han dynasty, but it was almost immediately rebuilt, and was again the capital of the Empire during the Sui and Tang dynasties from 589 to 906. Yang Kien was the first emperor of the Sui. For several hundred years before his time China had been divided into two empires; the one over which Yang Kien ruled was supreme in Shensi and Shansi, while the capital of the other was at Nanking, on the Yangtse. There came a day in 590 when How Chu, emperor of the south, was led in triumph as prisoner through the streets of Sian and was forced to worship Yang Kien's ancestors in his "Palace of the Long Lived Benevolence." Tai Tsung, "the glorious," reigned in Sian in 630. He drove back the barbarians of the west and north and founded a university in Sian which became famous all over Eastern Asia. Young princes from Corea and Japan and Turkestan were sent to Sian to be educated. It was Tai Tsung who said, "If a ruler refrains from extravagance, makes the taxes light, and sees that his people have more than enough for their daily needs, and appoints high-minded magistrates

* Williams' Historical Chapters, page 29.

to rule over them, the country will be at peace and theft and robbery will disappear from society."*

The Mongols never took very kindly to Sian. Kublai Khan made Pekin the capital in 1264, and appointed his son, Mang Kola, governor of Shensi, Sichuan, and Tibet. Sian was made the provincial capital. Five miles from the city Mong Kola built a palace, which Marco Polo says was "embellished with many fountains and rivulets, both within and on the outside of the buildings." †

When the Ming dynasty in 1630 was no longer able to repel the encroachments of the Manchus, a man of Shensi named Li Tsi Chung started a rebellion whose avowed object was to overthrow the reigning house and to save China from the Manchu barbarians. Li captured Sian and there established the capital of a new dynasty which he called the Tai Tsing. All of Northeastern China acknowledged Li as Emperor, and at the head of a large army he marched on Pekin in 1643. Its gates were opened to him; the Emperor Chwang Lieh Ti committed suicide, and a Sian dynasty once more ruled over China. But Li's triumph was short-lived. The scattered remnants of the Ming party persuaded the Manchus to aid them in driving Li from the throne. The allied armies compelled him to retreat from Pekin to Sian, where he made a last stand. Again he was defeated, and

* McGowan's History of China, page 295.

† Marco Polo's Travels, Wright's translation, page 249.

with a handful of followers fled into the wilderness south of Tung Kwan. Here he was killed by a party of farmers who were tired of the troubles which his wars had brought on the country. With his death the last opposition to the present Ts'ing dynasty disappeared, but it is worth noticing that Sian was the last place of importance in China to acknowledge the supremacy of the Manchus.

The fact that Sian has always been is its peculiar and unique charm. During the long centuries Sian has been besieged and taken and sacked and rebuilt times without number. Within its walls kings have been assassinated, and dynasties overthrown, but the old city has lived on. It is this eternity of things that for a modern from Europe or America gives to Sian a strange fascination. The Sianese have a reckless way of referring to lapses of time that seems hardly human. In listening to accounts of occurrences in the reign of Hwang Ti, discussed as familiarly as though they had happened fifty years ago, I began to realise what De Quincey meant when he said in an opium-flash, "If I were compelled to forego England and to live in China and among Chinese manners and modes of life and scenery, I should go mad." In Sian they tell you anecdotes of Fu hi and Shen-nung, who succeeded him. Mr. Shen-nung had a glass-stomach, through which he was wont to study the process of digestion of different herbs and vegetables. From the result of his observations he devised recipes for

various dishes that are eaten with the chop-sticks to-day. Mr. Shen-nung's free clinic, where he lectured on the subject of his study of his interior, was in Sian, and an old scholar who showed me about town talked of the "Shen-nung treatment" quite as nonchalantly as we might speak of the experiments of Dr. Koch or Pasteur. The parade-ground of the Shensi troops is on the site of the palace of Chung, the great wall-builder, whose reign was contemporary with Alexander the Great. A curio-dealer tried to sell me some pieces of baked clay which he said were bricks from Chung's palace. I asked a Sian man whether he thought they were genuine. "They probably are counterfeits," he replied, "but even if they are real they are not old enough to be interesting."

The present population of Sian, like that of most Chinese cities, cannot be determined with accuracy. The local officials estimate that before the recent famine it contained a million inhabitants. This was probably something of an exaggeration. Perhaps seven hundred thousand would be an approximate estimate of its present population.

A fault common to many Chinese cities is the lack of anything like plan or system in the arrangement of their streets. No matter how great may be the population of a town, it seldom presents to Western eyes the appearance of a metropolis. Streets and alleys usually straggle blindly in all directions without plan or method. But Sian is an exception

to the rule of disorder. While its streets have no sidewalks, they are all wide and extend across the city from wall to wall. They always intersect at right angles and the principal thoroughfares are paved with stone-blocks that, from centuries of use, are much worn and furrowed. Because it is so compact and the arrangement of its streets so regular, Sian is a far more imposing-looking city than Pekin. This fact the Sianese thoroughly appreciate and often ask strangers if they are not more favourably impressed with Sian than with the Manchu capital.

In the centre of the city, in front of the governor's residence, is the public square, where a fair is continuously in progress from sunrise to sunset. The sides of the square are lined with the tents and booths of peddlers, jugglers, fortune-tellers, and amusement-makers of every description known to Shensi. Late in the afternoon, after the day's work is done, the square is filled by a laughing, happy crowd, which passes from one booth to another applauding the various shows and throwing cash to the performers.

It was in the plaza that I first saw the Chinese version of Punch and Judy. Wooden figures of a man and woman were manipulated from behind a screen. They quarrelled and took delight in cutting off each other's heads. Their operator conducted the dialogue in the same falsetto voice that English Punch-and-Judy men have made familiar to Americans. But the most interesting of all the

A QUIET STREET—SIAN.

THE PUBLIC SQUARE—SIAN.

shows was the booth of one whom the natives called a "story-teller." During the greater part of the time the story-teller sat demurely on a stool apparently taking little interest in passing events, but suddenly, without any warning, he would leap on a platform and begin shouting out something in a loud voice, accompanying his harangue with vigourous gestures. At the beginning of each performance he set his face in a grimace which completely concealed his natural expression like a mask and which he never changed until the story was finished. At times he told jokes and gave conundrums for the crowd to answer, interspersed with favourite quotations from the classics, and occasionally he varied the performance by a burlesque of a character or type with which his listeners were familiar. An imitation of an old mandarin which I witnessed under the awning of a story-teller's booth was one of the cleverest bits of "take-off" I have seen anywhere. Although I did not understand a word of the monologue, I recognised the character instantly.

In the northwestern part of Sian is the Mohammedan quarter. It contains two mosques and schools for the study of the Koran. Religion is the only difference which distinguishes followers of the Prophet from other citizens of Sian. Mohammedan mothers are quite as punctilious as are Buddhist and Taoist in binding the feet of their daughters. Men of the established religions have constant busi-

ness-dealings with Mohammedan merchants whose shops are scattered all over the city. When it is remembered that only a few years ago these same Mohammedans tried to gain the dragon-throne for Islam and killed thousands of helpless Shensi villagers, the peace and security in which they live in Sian go a long way to make one question whether the Chinese are really possessed of all the fanatical prejudice against imported religion with which they are usually accredited. The Chinese assertion that Mussulmans have long dwelt in Sian is strengthened by the fact that Marco Polo mentions "Saracens" as one of the religious sects to be found in Sian in the thirteenth century. He frequently refers to the "Saracens" of Tartary and India, but his description of the capital of Shensi contains the only mention of Mohammedans to be found anywhere in his account of the Eighteen Provinces.

The Broadway of Sian extends from the northern to the southern gate close to the eastern wall. Many of the shops which line it are very large, and the stock of merchandise they expose for sale is large and varied. In neither the shops nor their contents is there so much of the bazar-effect as in Shanghai and some of the southern cities. Silver jewelry, ivory carvings, and bits of jade are seldom sold over Sian counters. The demand seems to be for things of a more substantial character, like silk, cotton-cloth, and tea. Because of its nearness to the mountain wilderness of Kansuh and Tibet, where wild

animals abound, Sian is the centre and shipping-point for the fur-trade of the northwest provinces. Shensi is the source of supply for the mink and otter-skins which mandarins all over the Empire use for the linings of their official robes. For several blocks the long street is devoted to a market for furs. The prices at which they are sold seem to an American ridiculously low. Ten taels (seven dollars) will purchase a large leopard-skin. Sian has one department-store called the "shop of the metropolis." It was described to me as a place where foreign goods were sold, but on visiting it I found that the only things not of Chinese origin which it contained were a few cakes of French scented soap and about ten packages of American cigarettes.

Sian has long been famous all over China for its banks. In Pekin, the Sianese are sometimes referred to as the "banking men." On a street that extends westward from the public square about half a mile are nearly a score of banks, whose business amounts to many millions of taels annually. Banks like those of the present day have existed in Sian for thousands of years, and yet the system on which their business has always been conducted is very similar to that of the United States. In all large cities of the empire Sian banks have correspondents with whom they keep funds on deposit, and against them they issue sight-drafts and sell bills of exchange. The rate of exchange depends upon the remoteness of the bank against which the draft is

issued and the difficulty of its collection. A Shensi draft is made payable to bearer, but the bank on which it is drawn will never pay it until the man who presents it is satisfactorily identified. Sian banks pay interest on commercial accounts, although few merchants allow their deposits to reach an amount larger than the immediate needs of their business. Their reserve-funds and profits are usually invested in other ways. Banks also issue promissory-notes in denominations of 5,000 and 10,000 cash which pass current as money everywhere in Shensi.

But if there is a similarity in the banking-systems of Sian and New York, there is a vast difference in methods. Down the side of a Sian banking-room extends a long counter, at one end of which are the scales for weighing taels. Behind the counter sit the clerks, each with his computing-board in front of him. If you ask any clerk to tell you what will be the amount of exchange on a certain number of Hankow taels at four and seven-eights per cent. he at once begins to move the wooden balls up and down the rods of his computing-board. His fingers fly over it in a sort of lightning backgammon which lasts for about a minute, and then he answers your inquiry correctly down to the thousandths of a tael cent. In making a computation a Sianese bank-clerk never uses a piece of paper or makes a figure. He does it all with his fingers and his Chinese brain. To me the strangest thing about a Sian bank was the simplicity of its book-keeping. As soon as a

transaction of any kind is concluded, the clerk writes a few characters with a marking-brush in a book which lies on a table behind the counter. It makes no difference whether it is the sale of a bill of exchange, or the receipt of a deposit, or the payment of interest, the entry is always made in that one book, and yet by referring to it a Sian banker can always give you a statement of your account quite as readily and accurately as can any bookkeeper in New York. If the time should ever come when Chinese methods are studied in detail, it would be interesting to learn how a large and intricate banking-business can be successfully conducted with one brown-paper book.

How the 7,000,000 of Shensi's inhabitants have been able for 5,000 years to get along without a post-office is another interesting problem that awaits a satisfactory explanation. In the entire province there is no provision for sending or receiving letters. When it is necessary for a merchant in Sian to send a letter to a correspondent in Hankow, he pays a muleteer of a caravan to carry his letter to its destination. Missionaries in the neighbourhood of Sian, occasionally hire a courier to carry their mail to the nearest post-office in Tai Yuan, 300 miles to the northward in Shansi. These are really the only two methods by which it is possible for a citizen of Sian to communicate by letter with the outer world. The postal system inaugurated by Sir Robert Hart has now extended

through most of the eighteen provinces. In Sichuen, for example, a line of government post-offices extends almost to the borders of Tibet.

But Shensi is unalterably opposed to a post-office. Sian has frequently been sounded on the subject by the foreign office in Pekin, and the answer has always been strongly in the negative. A large part of the opposition of the Sianese to a regular mail service can be ascribed to their dislike of letters. Nine-tenths of the citizens of Sian never write a letter from one year's end to the other. A letter is a means of communication with the outer world. To a certain extent it would bring the Sons of Han into touch with the foreigner, and is therefore to be avoided as a dangerous thing. The only institution of foreign origin in Sian is the telegraph-office. The single wire of the Chinese Imperial Telegraph now penetrates the most remote districts of the Middle Kingdom, and over it are daily transmitted the government-edicts and the orders to the mandarins, but, apart from these, two messages a month constitute a large business for a telegraph-office in an interior town of 200,000 inhabitants. The "wire on the poles" is heartily disliked by most Shensi farmers, who regard it as the abode of an evil spirit, and one of the first acts of the Boxers was to destroy the line for hundreds of miles. Sian's telegraph-office was established about eight years ago, but no one ever took it very seriously until the arrival of the exiled court, when it at once

became the medium by which the Empress Dowager could daily scold Li Hung Chang and Prince Ching in Pekin. The fact that the telegraph was used by the Emperor gave it a popularity with merchants and bankers that it had never enjoyed before. When I visited Sian the telegraph-office employed four operators, one of whom enjoyed the distinction of being the only Chinaman in the city who could speak English. He had been brought from Nanking at the time of the peace-negotiations, in order to facilitate the transmission of government-messages to representatives of the foreign allies.

The southern part of Sian contains the residences of its Four Hundred. The exteriors of their houses give little idea of the beauty of the interiors. A gateway in a low wall on the street opens into a court-yard, in which is usually a fountain or a gold-fish pond. The house stands at the rear of the court-yard, with wings extending around three sides of it. The furniture in the house of a rich man is always of sandal-wood or teak. In the corners of the rooms are draperies of gaily coloured silk, and on cabinets against the wall are rare specimens of porcelains, many of them quite as valuable in China as they would be in New York. The collecting of "peach-blows" and "Kiang Hi blues" is the favourite fad of most Sianese men of wealth. Because of the severity of Sian winters, houses of the better class are heated by a system of hot air, which antedates

an American furnace by several thousand years. On the outside of the house, close to the wall, is a covered pit about five feet deep and four feet square. Just below the surface of the ground is a row of apertures that connect with a series of copper-lined wooden troughs extending under the stone or brick floors of the house. During the winter months a fire is kept constantly burning in the pit and the heat rising from it circulates through the flue-troughs. As timber is scarce in Shensi, wood is seldom used for fuel. Anthracite coal of an excellent quality is brought on flat boats up the Wei Ho from Shansi and is sold at a reasonable price in Sian.

Sian, too, has its club and clubmen. Besides the societies of scholars and students to be found in all large Chinese cities, there are clubs whose membership is composed of coteries of men of different sorts and conditions on much the same plan as in the United States. There is the club of "the civil officials" and the "Military Club," besides several others, exclusive and expensive, whose members are nearly all mandarins' sons or rich young men about town. As a convenience for merchants and business men whose commercial interests may bring them to Sian from distant parts of the Empire, the rich residents of the city provide "Clubs of the Provinces." These occupy large buildings in the heart of the city. Each one is for the exclusive use of men from the province after which it is named. A

fur-buyer from Hankow would be put up at the Hupeh Club. A Pekin correspondent of a Sian bank would go to the Chili Club. At the club of his province an out-of-town visitor is expected to make his headquarters during his stay in Sian. He engages a room in the club-house, and uses it as a place for receiving men with whom he has business dealings.

If it be true that "society is not society without women," then there is no "society" in Sian. Wives and daughters rarely appear in public, and even in their own homes they are never allowed to meet any men who may call on their husbands or brothers. The more rich and prosperous a man may become the more he will invariably seclude the women of his family. The very few women to be met with in the streets of Sian all belong to the poorer class of the population. But if there is no "society" in Sian, there is no lack of old families. It is doubtful if family-trees older than those of Sian can be found anywhere on earth. Among the Sianese of to-day are a number of families in whose veins flow the blood of the men who helped to place the first Han dynasty on the throne. As a part of the worship of their ancestors the Chinese lay great stress on their lineage and keep close account of the names of all the great men of previous generations from whom they can claim descent. In the course of a conversation about some man who played a prominent part in the early history of

China, it is not at all unusual for the resident of Sian with whom you are talking to add, "He was my ancestor."

The Sianese do not take kindly to amusements of a light or frivolous character. The theatre is much less a factor in the social life of the capital of Shensi than it is in some of the other large cities. As a rule there are few things that a Chinaman enjoys more keenly than a clanging, discordant performance at a theatre. But in Sian I frequently heard the stage spoken of disparagingly. Several men assured me that they never went to the theatre because Confucius had expressed his disapproval of it. The most frequent social functions in Sian are the evening dinner-parties. For the purpose the host usually engages a room at a restaurant or in his club. The number of his guests is seldom more than twenty. A dinner of this kind usually lasts half the night. The twelve or fifteen courses are eaten very slowly and are interspersed with long discussions of a very serious character.

When I visited Sian it was just beginning to recover from one of the worst famines of the century. Less than six months previous to my arrival human flesh had been sold as food on its streets, and thousands of men and women had died of hunger in one suburb. Not since the Mohammedan rebellion had Sian known so much poverty, wretchedness, and suffering as followed in the wake of the famine of 1900, and at no time during the last thirty years

would it have been possible to see Sian under worse conditions than existed there when I reached it after a ride of twenty-seven days from Pekin. Yet in all that vast old city, with its crowded population, its diversified interests and occupations, there was no slum. There was no street that corresponded in any way to what we would term a "poor quarter." By the roadsides outside of the city were the caves where hundreds of wretches had died of hunger. But the sufferings of the dwellers in the caves were due to a special and extraordinary cause, a famine that had followed a drought. The famine-victims were not the sort of "poor" whom the Sianese could be said to "have always with them."

Under ordinary conditions almost every human being within the walls of Sian has a house to live in and is comfortably clothed. Almost the only exceptions are opium victims. A ride over the whole of Sian reveals no evidences of that habitually hopeless, heart-broken, degraded portion of the community who swarm in tenements on East Side alleys in New York, who are always a "necessary evil," and are sometimes described as "submerged." I do not mean to say that there is anything like an equality of wealth in Sian. On the contrary, among the mandarins, merchants, and bankers are a score of men who would be accounted rich anywhere in the world. But this fact makes it all the more curious that, while there should be some men in Sian whom we would call "very rich," there are

almost none to whom the term "very poor" could be applied in the sense in which it is understood in Christendom. Between the richest man whose villa is near the south wall and the poorest inhabitant of Sian there is not so wide a gulf of difference in education, opportunity, and environment as exists between a Fifth Avenue millionaire and the tenant of a Bowery lodging-house.

As a race the Chinese are natural gamblers. They seem by instinct to have a passion for games of chance. In the villages the farmers will sit for hours over a game played with cash, similar to San Francisco fan-tan. Men of means bet on games of dominoes, and even the process of drawing good or bad luck before the idols is a kind of religious lottery. But there are no gambling-houses or public games in Sian. Gambling is not only prohibited by law, but the law is enforced. Shensi missionaries have told me that nothing is considered more disgraceful in a mandarin's administration than his failure to suppress public gambling within his district. Many of the mandarin's faults may be condoned by his superiors, but should a gambling-house exist anywhere within his jurisdiction he would "lose his face" for life, and would probably be banished or imprisoned.

There are plenty of shops in Sian where liquor is sold, but there are no saloons. A man may purchase a bottle of sam-shaw to drink very sparingly at home. But only at large feasts or dinner-par-

ties does he drink liquor in public, and even on these occasions he would bring lasting disgrace upon his family and relatives if he were to drink to excess.

There are no "dives" in Sian, no haunts of crime and human degradation, neither are there any rendezvous of gilded vice and dissipation. Places of this character exist in China, only in foreign concessions, in treaty ports, where they are beyond the reach of Chinese law. Perhaps the saddest commentary I have ever heard on our civilisation was the remark of a fine old Mohammedan tea-merchant, with whom I became quite well acquainted in Sian. In his shop, near the north gate, we had been talking one afternoon about the Mohammedan rebellion that had come very near succeeding, but had failed. My friend said that he no longer considered the triumph of Islam probable in China because the nations who recognised the Prophet were not strong or powerful enough to make an impression on Confucian civilisation. "For my part," he continued, "I should rather like to see the Christians overthrow the idols and convert China to the worship of the 'One God,' but," he added, "the only trouble is if Sian were a Christian city, it would be as bad as Shanghai."

I shall not weary the reader with any theory of my own as to why these "necessary evils" of a Christian metropolis are unknown in an ancient and hidden city of China. If a native of Sian had

visited New York and were trying to describe it to his fellow-townsmen on his return, he would naturally refer to "submerged tenths," and gambling-houses and saloons, as phases of city life to which he was unaccustomed, and that consequently seemed to him novel and curious. I experienced a corresponding feeling of surprise and interest on finding that these same institutions were conspicuously absent in Sian. I would not be telling my story honestly and fairly if I described only things and never conditions. I have no desire to draw comparisons between two civilisations. I fully appreciate that the reader has many times been told that the Chinese are "uncivilised" and that they are "the Yellow Peril."

CHAPTER XIII

SIAN AND THE SIANESE—*Continued*

THE importance of Sian and the prominent part it has played in Chinese history are imperfectly understood on the Western side of the world. Even in parts of China as remote from Shensi as Pekin, very little is known of Sian. Shensi is separated from Tibet only by the province of Kansuh, and Sian is often referred to as a city of the border. Only during the last twelve years has it been possible for foreigners to live in Sian, and the number of white men who have ever visited it can be counted on the fingers of a man's hand. Even to-day no foreign resident can feel secure in Sian. The appointment of a reactionary governor or an outbreak of the anti-foreign element is likely at any time to result in all foreigners being ordered out of the city.

In the itinerary of a journey from Pekin to Tibet, Marco Polo describes a place called Kenzan,* which commentators have generally identified as Sian. Such it may be, but my own experience in travelling over the same route pursued by Marco's

* Kenzan is the name given to this somewhat indeterminate city by Wright, page 248. According to Yule, it is Kanren.

imaginary traveller (for it is only charity to believe that the author of Marco Polo's travels never visited the places in China which he described) has made me skeptical of his statements about anything. It seems to me that such truth as is to be found in his account of the Eighteen Provinces is largely confined to the copious foot-notes of his modern editors. Since reading the fantastic story of the "Prince of Dor," whose castle at "Thaigin" was somewhere between Ping Yang and the Yellow River, I am inclined to believe that the old Venetian traveller would have been heartily amused if he could have foreseen the seriousness with which his yarns have been interpreted by commentators of subsequent generations.

"Departing from Ka-chau-fu," says Marco Polo, "and proceeding eight days' journey in a westerly direction, you continually meet with cities and commercial towns, and pass many gardens and cultivated grounds with abundance of the mulberry or tree that contributes to the production of silk. At the end of those eight stages you arrive at the city of Kenzan, which was anciently the capital of an extensive, noble, and powerful kingdom, the seat of many kings highly descended and distinguished in arms." * The most diligent inquiry of recent commentators has been unable to discover what place is meant by Ka-chau-fu. No silk is now produced nearer to Sian than Lao ho Kieu, in Hupeh, 200

* Wright's translation of Marco Polo's travels, page 248.

miles to the southward. The climate of Shensi is too cold for the successful cultivation of mulberry-trees. The climate may have changed since Marco Polo's time. In their descriptions of the Nestorian tablet, both Abbe Huc and Professor Legge referred to Sian, but neither of them had visited it. For his copy of the tablet-inscription, Professor Legge was indebted to a missionary named Jonathan Lees, who travelled through Shensi in 1866.*

For more than twenty years the Roman Catholics have maintained a small chapel in Sian. The resident priests have, with few exceptions, been Chinese converts, although the chapel was in charge of the Italian Dominicans at Kao-ling, some thirty-five miles away. About fifteen years ago, a Protestant medical missionary opened a free dispensary in Sian, and tried to establish a mission. A mob destroyed his chapel and compelled him to flee for his life. During the three years which followed, the anti-foreign sentiment was so strong that no foreigner was allowed to enter Sian, much less to live there. Such were the conditions when, in 1890, Mr. Moir B. Duncan, of the British Baptist Missionary Society, rode through the streets of Sian, hidden away in a Chinese cart driven by a native convert. At first he preached in a suburb outside of the city-wall, but within a year he was allowed to rent a house in the centre of the city. Almost from the first Mr. Duncan was liked by the provincial officials. He

* Christianity in China, by James Legge, page 34.

held a series of public debates at the clubs with the ablest scholars of the city, on questions of astronomy and geography. The debates were largely attended and became fashionable with young mandarins and the men who surrounded the governor.

Mr. Duncan opened a book-store where translations of the writings of standard English and American authors were sold. In 1898, as the result of an anti-foreign outcry, special orders were issued by the governor which forbade the sale of so much as a yard of cloth made in any other country than China; any person known to have a foreign-made button on his coat was punished with a fine or imprisonment, and the sale of foreign-written books was prohibited, but the order in no way affected Mr. Duncan's personal popularity. The Sianese had ceased to regard him as a foreigner, and had grown to look upon him as one of themselves He became a friend of the governor and devised for him a system of irrigating the arid lands in the valley of the Wei Ho. The plan would have been carried out had it not been for the Boxer outbreak, which compelled Mr. Duncan to leave Shensi along with the other missionaries. On his return, in July, 1901, he received almost an ovation. He was welcomed as a beloved citizen. Although he always took pains never to criticise or interfere with the government, his advice was sought by mandarins of the highest rank, who were proud to call him their friend. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that

no native of Shensi in private life was more prominent in the affairs of the province or had a wider sphere of influence than the missionary whose kung kwan I shared for three weeks.

I reached Sian just three weeks after the Empress Dowager and the court had left it. For six months the capital of Shensi had been the centre of all the fanatical, the reactionary, and the anti-foreign elements of the Empire. In Pekin I had been told that "a white man's life is not worth five taels in the Empress Dowager's place of exile." These warnings were not of a kind calculated to prepare me for the kindliness and consideration I met with in Sian and the hospitality shown to me by almost every one with whom I came in contact. In the course of my investigation of famine-conditions I was compelled to ride all over the city and to make a number of inquiries. In these excursions I usually was accompanied only by my interpreter Wang. Not only was I never molested or interfered with, but men of all sorts and conditions went out of their way to assist me and to give me information.

Whenever I had occasion to enter a shop or office, the proprietor would invariably offer me a cup of tea, and would ask me questions about my journey and the mysterious West from which I came. The motive which prompted the inquiries may not have been any real curiosity as to the world outside of China. It was more an act of friendliness in selecting a subject of conversation that might interest me.

Several men whom I met casually in my wanderings about the city called on me at the kung kwan to present their compliments and to say that they had been pleased to make my acquaintance. The courtesy and consideration I received from officials could be explained as a mark of respect to Prince Ching's card and as an expression of gratitude to the Americans whose generosity had kept hundreds of human beings from starving; but my credentials and my connection with the famine-fund were not known to the Sianese in general. Their kindness may be attributed to the fact that I was known to be a friend of Mr. Duncan, and was therefore not to be included in the general dislike of foreigners. The unique and rather extraordinary position of "the missionary of Sian" in that far-off corner of the world was due simply to the fact that his life was an exemplification of his oft-expressed belief that "a man's a man for a' that," no matter what his colour or clothes or language. I have spoken of him somewhat at length not only because of the great assistance he gave to me, but because his life and work in Sian were an illustration of the fact that although China is still on a silver-basis the practice of the golden rule is quite as much appreciated there as in "enlightened" countries like our own.

The Governor of Shensi when I visited it was Li Shao Fen. By all of seven million inhabitants of the province he was much more often referred to and was far more greatly feared than was the Em-

LI SHAO FEN, GOVERNOR OF SHENSI, AND HIS TWO GRANDSONS

peror in Pekin. If a new arrival in Sian had never heard of Kwang Su or the Empress Dowager he would have believed that the China in which he lived was a kingdom of which the Governor of Shensi was the supreme power. By the people of Shensi an audience with a mandarin of any kind is regarded as a very serious matter, and a conversation with the Governor is almost the event of a lifetime. Yet when my host, Mr. Duncan, sent word to the Governor that I wished to talk over the famine-situation with him, a courier almost immediately brought back a note replying in the affirmative and appointing an audience for the following afternoon.

His Excellency Li's residence was called the palace. It was long and low and was not far from the yamen or council-chamber in the centre of the city. As Mr. Duncan and myself alighted from our cart at the gate at the appointed time, we were met by a mandarin's servant who took our cards and led us through a succession of court-yards to within a hundred feet of the big front-doors of the palace. Here he suddenly left us and disappeared through a side-building. For some minutes we stood alone in the centre of the court-yard, while the sounds which we heard from behind the closed doors gave evidence that something unusual was happening. Orders were given in a loud voice and there was a noise as of furniture being moved over a stone floor. Several soldiers who were lounging lazily about near

the door suddenly aroused themselves and hurried into the building. The unseen preparations produced an impression similar to a wait at a theatre before the beginning of the play. This effect was heightened by the doors themselves. They were of great size, and on them was painted a design of dragons and gods and flowers that would have done very well for a drop-curtain.

Presently from somewhere within the recesses of the building a discordant blast was blown on a trumpet and the doors swung back. A young secretary of the Governor stepped out and clasped his hands in front of him. We followed him to the doorway and looked down a long hall. In the centre of it stood two lines of soldiers and mandarin's servants facing each other and forming a lane which ended in a divan at the farther end of the room. The soldiers belonged to a crack Shensi regiment that constituted the Governor's body-guard. They were armed with broadswords and their uniforms were new and immaculate. As we passed down the human lane each man in succession dropped on one knee and made a sort of curtsey. To the right and left of the divan of the Governor were grouped the subordinate mandarins of the city. In front of them was the Governor, an iron-grey man with a strong jaw and an immobile, emotionless face. He was rather tall and slender; his nose was aquiline and his lips thin and compressed, an aristocrat anywhere, a man able to govern

others because he had first learned to govern himself, a conservative by nature and education, a ruler of the Sons of Han. Such were my first impressions of His Excellency Li Shao Fen. Even more than with most mandarins his manner was Anglo-Saxon. In talking with him it would be impossible for an American to have that sense of strangeness and hesitation as to what to do next that he might experience in an interview with an official of Spain or Italy. His Excellency insisted on my taking the left-hand seat beside him on the divan, an honour which I was loath to accept in the presence of one so great and mighty. During the interview which followed, the lines of soldiers and servants remained immovable, facing each other without glancing either to the right or the left. I felt that they must have been inwardly cursing me for keeping them standing for so long a time and I sincerely wished that Chinese etiquette permitted chairs for the witnesses of an official interview.

"My people in Shensi," said the Governor, "are very grateful to the men from the West who have sent this money to the sufferers from famine. You say that the contributors are Americans. I was never able to understand the difference between Americans and Englishmen. They dress alike, they belong to the same race, they speak the same language though in different dialects. Everyone who belongs to our race we consider Chinese. This

Western idea of two men of the same blood belonging to different nationalities, I do not understand."

I tried to throw a little light on this complex problem, and then we talked about means and measure for famine-relief. I found that there was no detail of the subject with which the Governor was not entirely familiar. The co-operation which the subordinate officials had given Mr. Duncan in his distribution of the American money was all in compliance with His Excellency's orders. "You have travelled a long distance," he said.

"You have seen something of my province and my people, who, were it not for famine, would be very happy. What do you think ought to be done to prevent the recurrence of such a calamity?" I replied that I feared it would be an act of great presumption for me, a stranger, to offer an opinion on the subject to one so much better informed than I on the conditions and needs of his people. "Oh no," he said, quickly, "I would not have asked you if I did not want your reply. Tell me what you think would be the best way permanently to prevent famines."

Thus urged, I had no recourse but to tell the Governor of what seemed to me the only method by which Shensi famines could be made impossible in future. "If a railroad," I said, "connected Sian with any of the food-markets of the Empire, like Hankow or Pekin, a widespread famine could be averted, because by this means enough to supply

the needs of your people could always be brought from the more productive parts of the country, no matter how severe and long-continued was the drought in Shensi."

"In some ways I agree with you," he said, slowly. "It is true that our famines could be averted by railroads, but connected with them are several disadvantages. They bring in foreigners, whom I do not like, and they throw men out of work. A railroad to Sian would deprive hundreds of families of the means of earning a livelihood. I have always been opposed to railroads, but since I have seen the horrors of this famine, I have about decided that they are a necessity, and I should not oppose one whose terminus was in Sian."

On the afternoon following our audience at the palace, I returned from a short walk to find our household at the kung kwan in a state of unusual excitement. At a row of basins on a bench in the court-yard, the servants were washing their faces. A tall convert was sweeping the flag-stones. This extraordinary exhibition of cleanliness alarmed me, and I sent hurriedly for Wang. He emerged from his room at the side of the yard, with his hair hanging in loose tresses over his shoulders. He was followed by a barber, carrying a comb and razor.

"What is all this about?" I demanded, sternly. "What are you all washing your faces for? Haven't I told you that you are not to have your

queue braided until evening, after your day's work is done?"

"I know it. I know it, my master," he cried, "but the Governor, he send a man to say he will call on you in an hour. It is a big business, the Governor is. For such a big business, man must wash the face and braid the queue." Then I, too, caught the infection of preparation and tried to rise equal to the occasion. The brick bed in my room was transformed into a divan by throwing over it a red cloth. My cook was posed in a corner beside a tea-pot. I put on the one unsullied linen shirt that had survived the long journey through a laundryless country.

These preparations were hardly completed when a shouting in the street announced the arrival of His Excellency. His sedan chair was accompanied by about twenty soldiers on horse-back. A secretary brought me the Governor's card, and I hurried to the gate to meet him. As we walked together through the court-yard I apologised for the unworthiness of the surroundings of his reception, but as the Governor settled down on our improvised divan, he said to me, through Mr. Duncan, "I see that you have learned the ways of the Black Haired people. You know the difference between the right and left-hand seat."

We talked about my journey through his province. I found that there was not a town of which he did not know the population nor a temple whose

builder he could not tell at a moment's notice. "I have been told," he remarked, dryly, "that Christianity teaches men to forgive those who have wronged them. This famine-money would seem to indicate that such was the case, because American Christians have considerable reason to dislike the Chinese, for the way in which the Boxers persecuted the missionaries, but until now I have never seen any indications that Christians really forgave their enemies. Of course you cannot understand why my people dislike the missionaries. No man from the West can be expected to do that. It may be that we shall understand each other better now that the trouble is over. Confucius taught us that all men are brothers, and if my people realise this fact, they will not annoy the missionaries."

The Governor showed considerable interest in my map of China, on which I had marked, by days, the stages of journey from Pekin, but turning quickly, he asked: "Now where is the United States." I took down a wall-map of the world, and tried to explain the relative position of the Eastern and Western hemispheres. As Mr. Duncan translated my words, a kindly smile overspread the Governor's face. "Your barbarian map is wrong," he said. "The United States borders upon China; it must do so because China is the Middle Kingdom; it is in the centre of all nations and the world is flat." I replied that in our country, we laboured under the impression that the world was round, but

that a knowledge of its shape was, after all, not nearly so important as a proper understanding of the peoples who lived on it, and that, as my learning was greatly inferior to the Governor's, I should during my stay in Shensi act on the supposition that the world was flat. In this fashion we talked for nearly an hour. The conversation was quite as simple and natural as it would have been had my visitor been an American with whom I had become recently acquainted. In the governor's manner there was no trace of pompousness or Philistine complacency. To my barbarian ignorance he deferred with far more consideration than many estimable persons in the United States would have shown toward an expression of Chinese ideas of geography. The governor of Shensi did not use my remarks about the roundness of the world as a text for a lecture on the hopeless darkness of non-Confucian civilisation. Neither did he hold me up as a sad object-lesson in the ignorance of the heathen. He was willing to allow me to hold my own opinions on non-essentials. In other words L. Shao Fen was a gentleman, and would have passed for such quite as much in New York or London as in Sian.

On an evening a few days before the departure from Sian of Mr. Duncan and myself, a little dinner was given in our honour by several young men of the city. None of our hosts were Christian converts. They were either mandarins' sons or

men who had recently taken degrees at the public examinations. The restaurant where the dinner was held had been the Delmonico's of Sian for several centuries. It was a long, narrow building with a stairway at the back that led to a series of private dining-rooms, one of which we occupied. While waiting for dinner we sat on a large divan at the end of the room, where our hosts smoked their water-pipes and provided us with cigarettes. The dinner consisted of many courses and was served on a large, round table. With the exception of the chop-sticks there was nothing in the manners or deportment of our hosts that differed very essentially from Western standards of good form in dining. In beginning a course they always waited until Mr. Duncan and myself, as guests, had taken the initiative. They did not talk in loud tones, and they never rested their elbows on the table. We talked about the politics of the day, joked, and told stories. They all had a very poor opinion of the pretensions of the Pekin Court set, with whom they had come in contact during the Imperial exile in Sian. Our hosts said that the Manchu swells "wouldn't do" at all. They had a penchant for gaily coloured tunics, and they wore their caps on one side. They liked to be conspicuous in the street. They were really very amusing, but, after all, you couldn't expect them to be otherwise. They were practically foreigners. Their ancestors came into China only four hundred years ago.

The talk turned on the Chinese in the United States, and one man said: "Of course, the emigrants from China to America are of the most ignorant and worthless kind. The mere fact that a Chinaman wants to leave his native land is proof that something must be wrong with him. No gentleman would ever think of living in a foreign country. It is not at all strange that the United States Government prohibits such Chinese from landing. The only wonder to me is that they are tolerated at all." This sentiment I heard repeated several times in Shensi. The men of that province who have heard of the Chinese Exclusion Act bear the United States little ill-will because of it. The Shensi view of Chinese emigration to the United States is not shared by the residents of Hong Kong or Shanghai. In these places there is a loud outcry against "American discrimination," mingled with talk of retaliatory measures, but the men of the old land believe that China is quite as good a place for their race to-day as it has been at any time during the last five thousand years; they have a hearty contempt for an emigrant.

As the dinner-party broke up amid "good-nights" and "good-byes," and we rode homeward through the darkened streets, the thought uppermost in my mind was that queues and a yellow skin and chop-sticks are, after all, only a very incomplete disguise that thinly hides "one touch of nature."

CHAPTER XIV

WHEN KWANG SU WAS AN EXILE

ALTHOUGH in China women have always been regarded as inferiors and their position as defined by law has never been much better than that of slaves, they have always played a prominent part in Chinese history, and several times a woman has been as much the real ruler of the empire as is the Empress Dowager to-day. As far back as 1818 B.C. Mei Hi, the beautiful queen of the Emperor Kwei, caused the downfall of the Hia dynasty by a revolution that resulted from her extravagance and cruelty. The women who have succeeded Mei Hi in power have nearly all rivalled her in wickedness, although there have been exceptions like Chang Sun, the queen of the great Emperor Tai Tsung. When she was dying in Sian, Chang Sun said to her husband: "Put no jewels in my coffin. Let my head rest on a wooden tile and fasten my hair with wooden pins. Listen to no unworthy men and build no costly palaces. If you promise me these things I shall die happy." But the most remarkable woman in Chinese history was the Empress Dowager Wu How. In the days of the T'ang dynasty Wu How was the queen of Kau Tsung. On the death

of the Emperor in A.D. 684, she was declared regent during the minority of her step-son, Chung Tsung. Wu How ruled with an iron hand. She was cruel and fanatical. She tortured and killed her enemies by scores. She persecuted the Nestorian Christians. She scandalised Sian by her vagaries and wild amours, but under her the Empire prospered. Her armies put down rebellions and drove back the barbarians. She was feared but beloved, and to this day she is usually referred to by the title she assumed for herself, "The Great and Sacred Empress, equal of Heaven."

Tsz' Hi, the present Empress Dowager, is the first woman who has occupied the dragon-throne since Wu How. It is a misapplication of terms to say that Chinese history repeats itself in the sense that it contains isolated parallels such as are found in the histories of other nations. The history of China is one long continuous repetition. Its current never changes its course or increases its speed. Time makes no difference in customs, or systems, or points of view. The continuous existence of the same conditions in China makes possible only a recurrence of similar events. The range of action is limited. As a matter of course, the same things happen over and over again, with changes only in the dates and in names of the actors. Like Wu How, Tsz' Hi was the relict of one Emperor and the guardian of another. Like Wu How, Tsz' Hi was a woman, in a country where women have al-

ways been treated with contempt. Like her predecessor of twelve centuries ago, the reigning Empress Dowager realised that if she were to rule at all she must be more forceful, more aggressive, more cruel than any man. In order to further their own selfish schemes Tsz' Hi's enemies used against her the same arguments as had the men who sought the downfall of Wu How. They said she was only a poor, weak woman, unfit to govern. She showed her subjects that her enemies were mistaken by cutting off their heads, exterminating their families, and seizing their property.

Being women of China, neither Wu How nor Tsz' Hi had any education beyond the results of their own experience. They both were exceptionally fanatical and superstitious. Wu How helped to drive out the Nestorians and Tsz' Hi has always hated Christians. But these very faults have helped to make the reigning Empress Dowager beloved by the great mass of the people just as was Wu How. Both have always been regarded as the defenders of the ancient faiths and systems, and both have received the homage that a strong nature has always commanded since the world began. The attitude of the barbarians during the present regency of Tsz' Hi has been exactly the same as it was in Wu How's time. On the outside of a nation as exclusive as China there must always be some peoples who chafe at not being allowed to enter it. During a momentary triumph of her barbarian enemies, the Empress

Dowager naturally retired, with her court and the Emperor who was her ward, to the city that Wu How's similar reign had helped to make glorious, and the second greatest woman in Chinese history made Sian the capital of the Empire.

Although her departure from Pekin was enforced, it has never seemed to me exactly correct to call it a flight. No one had molested the Empress Dowager during the thirty-six hours following the fall of the capital, and whatever may have been the intentions of the allies, no one had yet attempted to make her a prisoner. In the light of the *laissez-faire* policy pursued by the foreign plenipotentiaries toward all Chinese offenders it is doubtful whether the Empress Dowager would ever have been treated with great severity. During the foreign occupation of Pekin, Tsz' Hi and Kwang Su might have been detained on parole and subsequently released when the trouble was over. Certain it is that there was nothing in the action of the allies to give the Empress Dowager or her step-son any cause for immediate alarm, when on the morning of a day in August, 1900, they climbed into their carts and were driven quietly out of the north gate of Pekin. No attempt was made at pursuit, and after a short rest near Kalgan, in northern Chili, the journey to Sian was determined upon and a cloak of systematic deception was thrown over the Imperial exile which has been continued ever since. Orders were sent to the mandarins at every town along the route to prepare for the com-

ing of the Emperor of China, who had decided to make a progress through his dominions. It was officially announced that the presence of so many foreigners in Pekin was distasteful to the Emperor, and that, loyal to the traditions of his country, he had decided to remove his capital to Sian.

From the time of Yau and Shun it has been the practice of Emperors of China occasionally to travel leisurely through their dominions, studying the conditions of their people and worshipping at the famous temples. That Kwang Su should follow the example of his predecessors was very much to his credit and was a cause of great rejoicing to his subjects. In their eyes, too, his departure from a capital that barbarians had profaned was an act of especial virtue, worthy of an Emperor of China. In this light the people of Shansi and Shensi regarded the journey of the Empress Dowager and the Emperor through the two provinces, and this view of what the West calls "the exile" is held today all over the interior of China. Of the scores of men who have given me their opinions on the subject, not one has ever intimated a belief that the Empress Dowager was compelled to leave Pekin, or that the foreign allies were in any way the victors. In discussions of the trouble with the barbarians it was always taken for granted that they were unsuccessful in any designs they might have entertained against China, because China was invincible, and that all enemies must eventually retire, leaving

things as they found them; and as a matter of fact this is just about what happened before the exiled court consented to return to Pekin.

Every mandarin along the route of nearly eight hundred miles knew that if the Empress Dowager found that insufficient provision had been made for her in his district, his head would likely be the forfeit of her displeasure, and all the mandarin's subjects realised equally clearly that any failure on their part to comply with official orders for a public reception would be punishable with death. The result was that the highroads of Shansi and Shensi showed signs of activity such as they have not known since the days of Genghis Khan. Villages were swept and dusted; dilapidated kung kwans were remodelled and redecorated; old idols in the temples were given fresh coats of paint and gilding; and thousands of men repaired roads and bridges. At the resting-place near Kalgan assembled the members of the court who were to accompany the Emperor into exile. Along with them came a vast train of attendants and three or four regiments of soldiers. The extensive luggage of this small army was carried in carts which preceded the yellow chairs of the Emperor and Empress by several miles.

According to Chinese ideas of propriety rapid journeys are extremely bad form. The greater the dignity and position of the traveller the slower must be his progress. The Empress Dowager and the Emperor stayed for at least twenty-four hours in

every town of importance through which they passed; they worshipped at all the principal temples and they received the petitions and the addresses of hundreds of mandarins. They never hurried and they always acted as though the foreign allies in Pekin and anything they might do was too unimportant to be worthy of their consideration. They succeeded in creating the impression everywhere that it was only their good pleasure to travel to Sian, and the simple farmers to-day speak of the Imperial exiles as though they had conferred a lasting honour on the old land by travelling over it.

From Kalgan the Imperial party journeyed southwest to Tai Yuan in Shansi. The route thence to Sian was the one I followed fifteen months later. The Imperial progress was still the all-absorbing topic of conversation, and, to judge from appearances, will continue to be so for a generation. In a place as dull and workaday as a Shansi town the visit of the Son of Heaven was a thing never to be forgotten. More than one mandarin has told me that he regarded the welcome that he was able to give to the Empress Dowager as the greatest event of his life. In the larger towns the Imperial residence was the district yamen, but in the smaller places, where the mandarin was not rich enough to afford a yamen, the kung kwan became the temporary home of the sovereigns of China. Over the entrances of at least ten of these official inns I found signs inscribed with the words "A thousand years,"

a Chinese form of greeting to the Emperor, that is about equivalent to the French "Vive." I became accustomed to being gravely reminded by the banchaiti that the pile of bricks on which I slept was the same bed on which the "Son of Heaven" had passed the night. For the next ten years Shensi banchaitis will probably continue to say to travellers, "My Emperor liked this tea," or the great Empress Mother said, "How beautiful is this wall-paper." There was scarcely a town along the entire line of the journey that had not a story of some incident of the Imperial progress. Although the importance of these incidents was doubtless unduly exaggerated in the minds of the people of the dull towns where they occurred, they showed that the Empress Dowager was always the dominating personality. Compared with the power that she never hesitated to exercise and the fear she everywhere inspired, the authority of the Emperor was only that of a weak child.

From the time of her departure from Pekin the Empress Dowager seemed to have made up her mind that the Boxer movement was a sad failure, for which she had feelings only of disgust and detestation. To the great surprise of the mandarins, all attempts to revive anti-foreign fanaticism along the line of the journey were crushed quickly and mercilessly. As Tsz' Hi was entering Kie hiu, a man in Boxer regalia ran into the road, and kneeling beside her chair, began a eulogistic address on her efforts to exterminate the "foreign devils." The

Empress Dowager, so an eye-witness told me, merely motioned to one of her body-guard, who quietly walked behind the Boxer, and with one stroke of his sword cut off his oration and his head at the same time. The Empress Dowager sent for the mandarin of Kie hiu, and, after publicly upbraiding him for allowing such a demonstration to take place, she degraded him from office. As it happened, the mandarin had done all he could to suppress the Boxers in his district, and he had saved the life of a missionary. The Boxer had been allowed to make his address only because the mandarin supposed that it would please the Empress Dowager. But he was degraded, nevertheless, and when I visited Kie hiu he was still out of office.

Word was brought to the Empress Dowager that a member of the Imperial household, a Manchu of high rank, was making a handsome "squeeze" out of a contract for the carts that carried the luggage of the court. She at once announced that as official corruption was the cause of all of the troubles of China, an example must be made of the dishonest official; a few minutes later his head was rolling in the dust of the Shansi road. Nearly all the stories that were told to me to illustrate the true greatness of the Empress Dowager concluded with the words "and his head was cut off." Accounts of the imperial progress through Shansi and Shensi, as related by mandarins and banchaitis, strongly resemble the experiences of "Alice" with the "Wonderland"

queen. But this wholesale decapitation did not tend to make the Empress Dowager less popular with her subjects.

Some of the accounts of recent happenings in China convey the impression that this wonderful old woman maintains her position and prestige only by the fear that she has inspired in her people, who hate her, and who would rejoice to see her deposed from power forever. How far this feeling may prevail in the treaty-ports and places where foreign influence has made itself felt, I am unable to judge, but certain it is that throughout the interior of the Empire, Tsz' Hi, reigning regent of China, was never more beloved than she is to-day. The Chinese do not have that blind worship of the person of the sovereign as such, which characterises a subservient Russian peasant. The existing sentiment of extreme loyalty to the Empress Dowager is due to a great admiration and respect for her character and an unbounded confidence in her ability. Some of the younger mandarins admit that she has made mistakes, but these are due to her intense zeal for the welfare of her subjects. By the common people she is almost worshipped. In their eyes her faults and cruelties are virtues. They believe that her only motive in cutting off heads and torturing officials who have dared to oppose her is to maintain "Peace." Wherever the Empress Dowager goes there is "Peace." For this reason she is an ideal ruler. "May she live a thousand years."

In a park in the northern part of Sian there stands a long, low, brick building. It is very old, and was for several centuries the official residence of the viceroys of the northwest provinces. Since the acquisition of Eastern Turkestan by the Chinese Empire, the residence of the viceroy has been removed to Lanchou, in Kansuh. For a time, the old house in the park was occupied by successive governors of Shensi, but about twenty years ago somebody announced that it was haunted. Just who the spirits were who showed a preference for the dreary old pile, or how they manifested themselves I was never able to discover. But it was haunted, and it was therefore abandoned to rats and bats for nearly two decades. This was its condition when Tuan Fang, governor of Shensi, was notified that Sian was to be the capital of China, and that the Empress Dowager and her step-son must find a palace prepared for their reception on their arrival. However disagreeable Chinese spirits may be to ordinary persons, they invariably flee from the presence of the Son of Heaven. They would never trouble Kwang Su and his step-mother. The old viceroy's yamen was larger than any other of Sian's public buildings. It was selected as the palace. Three hundred carpenters and decorators were put at work to renovate and redecorate it. A number of buildings on adjacent lots were appropriated as houses for the members of the court. These, too, were remodelled and the grounds around them were ornamented by

the building of summer-houses and arbours. The whole area, comprising about fifteen acres, was then inclosed with a high brick-wall, in evident imitation of the forbidden city of Pekin.

In Chinese eyes any palace where the Emperor has lived is sacred and must remain for several months in exactly the same condition as he left it. Immediately on the departure of the court for Pekin the gates in the wall around the Sian palace were closed and a guard of soldiers was stationed in front of them. A mandarin and a corps of soldiers were placed in charge of the premises, to see that none of the furniture was moved, and that the buildings were dusted and cleaned every morning as carefully as though Tsz' Hi and Kwang Su still occupied them. Everyone was forbidden by the Governor under severe penalty from attempting to enter the palace-grounds without the express permission of the mandarin in charge, and this could be obtained only on rare occasions by officials of high rank. Even my host, Mr. Duncan, told me that the palace was the one place in Sian which he did not consider it wise or safe for a foreigner to attempt to visit.

After I had been about a week in Sian, Wang and I started out one afternoon from the kung kwan for a walk before dinner. We wandered around the public square for a while, and then struck off toward the north gate. We had no particular objective point in view and were strolling

THE PALACE GATE AND THE CHEERFUL LIONS.

along very leisurely when we discovered that the street which we were following terminated at the gate of the palace. I had several times passed the gate before, although I had never approached it by this particular street. I had abandoned the idea of visiting the palace, but as the gate confronted us on that particular afternoon, a sudden and overpowering desire to see what was behind it came over me.

Guarding the gate were two huge stone lions. They probably were sitting there when Columbus first sailed for America, but their youth recently had been renewed by bright, green paint and the tongues which hung out of their mouths had been newly gilded. Their colour had destroyed any trace of fierceness they ever possessed. They looked as though they might be British lions who had adopted Irish colours, and were in consequence unusually cheerful. With their mouths wide open, the lions seemed to be laughing at Wang and me, as they looked down at us from their pedestals. "Try it," they seemed to be saying, "It's easy," and I determined to act on the suggestion.

"Wang," I said, "it's up to us. We are going into the palace."

"May be we get the heads cut off," he said; "but if my master say so, for me it is must can do."

We walked over to a soldier standing in front of a sentry-box. I gave him my card and asked him to call the mandarin, as I wished to speak with him. The soldier demurred and refused to receive

my card. Wang turned on him and began a harangue in Chinese. I could only guess its nature by the way in which the soldier received it. Every time he tried to get a word in edgeways, Wang increased the speed of his speech. Without raising his voice he poured out a torrent of words at the rate of about a thousand a minute. By and by the soldier seemed to droop under the fire. He hung his head and looked at the ground humiliated. Without letting his voice drop, Wang came to a sudden stop. The soldier took the card and ambled off through the gateway. "He can do now," Wang explained, "I speak with him in scolding."

With my previous experience of mandarins, I had pictured the man in charge of the vacant palace as being well advanced in years and exceptionally grave and sedate. I was quite unprepared for such a youthful mandarin as the one who returned with the soldier to the gate. He was not more than twenty-five years old. He wore a purple-silk tunic and a grey kilt. The button on his cap indicated his rank unmistakably. The fact that he had attained to such a position so early in life seemed to indicate that he was possessed of more than ordinary ability. I told him that I had a great desire to get some idea of a place which had been the residence of a monarch who ruled over more men than any other man on earth; and I requested permission to walk through the palace-grounds. "The Son of Heaven lived here," he said, "and no

one can enter the place where he has been. But come into my office," he added, "I want to talk to you." He led the way to a little building just inside the gate. "I, too, am a foreigner," said the young mandarin as a servant brought us some tea. "My home is in Sichuan. I have been only a year in Shensi. Sichuan is a beautiful land, where there are waterfalls and high mountains and bamboo forests." As he talked of home the stiffness and official reserve vanished. I forgot that he was a Chinaman and a mandarin, and he acted as though he had forgotten that I was a foreigner. We were both men talking about home.

"Whenever I think of my native land," said the mandarin of the palace, "my thoughts take the form of music. One cannot speak in words of such a thing as home." From a drawer in a cabinet in the corner of the room, he took out a zither and laid it on the table in front of him. "I am on a Sichuan mountain," he said. "The sun is shining down on me through the bamboo leaves. I can hear the sound of a waterfall, and white rabbits are playing near me. It is one of the hours when one cannot help being happy." His fingers ran over the zither-strings; his dark Sichuanese face lighted; his eyes sparkled. For the moment he seemed oblivious of us and everything about him. His playing, soft at first, grew louder and faster and lingered on the high notes; then died away in a dreamy monotony around the middle of the scale. "Were you

improvising?" I asked, as he finished. "Certainly," he replied, as though surprised at my question. "Music is the words of a man's soul. No two men have the same soul, and one man cannot read the soul of another. If I were to play notes that someone else had written, it would not be my soul that speaks; it would not be music. Barbarian music is not the speech of the soul. It is noise. I have heard Christians singing in the mission chapels."

"There is considerable truth in what you say of the songs Chinese Christians sing," I replied; "but you are entirely wrong in supposing that all of our music is without meaning. Between the Black-Haired People and us barbarians there isn't so much difference as you suppose. In the theory of music, as with everything else, the difference lies chiefly in the fact that what is a very old story with you is a new one with us. During the last one hundred years a new kind of music has become popular in barbarian countries. Every note means something. Its sound is nothing; its motive everything. Men who understand it and a lot more who don't say that it is the language of their souls. Being an old-fashioned barbarian, I personally prefer music that is noise, but I realise perfectly that a man can't tell in words about the land where he was born, and we barbarians sing about our homes, which we love quite as dearly as you do Sichuan."

"Then the zither has at least made you understand the love I have for my country, and you have

a respect for this Empire?" he asked. I answered in the affirmative, wondering what he was going to do next. "I have played to you," he said, springing up from the table, "in order that the music might make you feel the love we have for our country, so that you would respect it. If you do that you will also respect the place where my Emperor has lived. The responsibility of admitting anyone to these grounds rests with me. I usually do not allow my countrymen to enter, for even they cannot realise what a solemn thing it is to walk through the rooms from which my country has been ruled. You could not be expected to respect the palace because you are a barbarian, and so I refused when you asked me for permission to walk through the grounds. But I have changed my mind. You understand what the zither said. You are my friend. I will myself show you through the palace." I tried to thank him. But the delicacy of the climax had overwhelmed me. I was the one now who was at a loss for words—not merely Chinese words, but words of any kind. I so far forgot the rules of mandarin decorum as to shake his hand. Turning to Wang, whose powers of interpreting were being strained to the uttermost, I said: "Tell him that he is right. I am a barbarian."

It was in this way that I happened to be the first white man to enter the palace of the exile in Sian. The young mandarin and myself grew to be very good friends. He called on me at the kung

kwan, and I visited him several times in his office by the gate. Not only did he keep his promise to show me through the palace, but he told me much of the gossip of the hidden court that centred about the Empress Dowager. Probably several of the narratives were exaggerations of fact. Possibly a few were untrue, though never intentionally so. Several times my guide and friend expressed surprise that I, as a barbarian, could at all comprehend the meaning of his stories of court procedure and intrigue.

The main building of the palace was painted red and was covered with a roof of brown tile. As in most Chinese houses of the better class, the front door was directly in the centre. There was no attempt at vestibule or hallway, but upon entering one passed directly into the throne-room. The ceiling was high and was covered with bright yellow paper. On the floor was a carpet composed of small patches of red cloth sewn together. Opposite the door against the rear wall was a square settee of teak-wood. Its back and sides were quaintly carved, and over it hung a crimson canopy. On this settee the Emperor Kwang Su sat cross-legged on the state occasions when he received Manchu princes of the blood royal. Even in its vacancy my mandarin-guide always approached the former throne with the greatest reverence and made an involuntary kow-tow to the mighty presence that had recently occupied it. All mandarins and the ordinary court offi-

cials were received in the left wing of the palace. This was a long, narrow room in which the principal piece of furniture was a bamboo bench covered with a yellow silk cushion. On this the Empress Dowager and Kwang Su sat during the daily audiences. The Empress Dowager invariably received the first kow-tow of a visiting mandarin, and she always occupied the left-hand seat. The only other articles of furniture beside some ebony stools and settees were two large French clocks which had been brought from Pekin, and that had never made the slightest pretence of keeping time, but this defect did not lessen their value in the eyes of the Emperor. He was very fond of them, and he often fixed his gaze on them while the mandarins were presenting their petitions to his stepmother.

Directly in the rear of the palace was a similar building that constituted the living apartments of the Imperial exiles. It, too, was flanked with large wings, the Empress Dowager's room being at the left of the entrance in the centre. In the original plan for remodelling the viceroy's yamen into a palace, a large suite of rooms in the right wing was set aside for the Empress Dowager, but when, on her arrival, she discovered the provision that had been made for her she flew into a violent rage and threatened to cut off the heads of all the architects and builders who had anything to do with renovating the palace. She was pacified only by being allowed to make her own selection of rooms. This she did

by appropriating the apartments set aside for Kwang Su in the place of honour in the left wing. He, as usual, yielded and meekly retired to the right wing of the building.

Two of the finest chefs in Sian were engaged to provide the imperial meals. From the first the Empress Dowager did not take kindly to their Shensi methods of cooking. She constantly scolded them and frequently had them punished. One night the shed which served as a kitchen caught fire and burned to the ground. The wrath of the Empress Dowager was kindled against the two cooks. She had their heads cut off in the palace court-yard.

The most picturesque part of the Sian palace were the quarters set aside for Ta-a-ko, who some years ago was announced as the Heir-apparent to the throne of China. His Royal Highness occupied a large building in the rear of the park, some little distance from the palace. In front of his house was an artificial pond filled with gold-fish. In one of the wings of Ta-a-ko's house was a long hall, whose front-wall by a curious arrangement could be removed like a screen. On hot summer days this was a favourite lounging-place for young princes. Here they reclined on divans, gossiped, smoked their water-pipes and a little opium and looked at the gold-fish.

Ta-a-ko is Prince Tuan's son. His selection as Crown Prince was supposed to be due to the overpowering influence at court of his father. It was

supposed in Pekin that Ta-a-ko had followed Prince Tuan into Turkestan. Instead, however, the Heir Apparent joined the exiled court in Sian, where he at once became the leader of what might be called the younger set among the Manchu princes. Ta-a-ko was the "Bonnie Prince Charlie" of China. He was about nineteen years old. In the opinion of almost everyone in Sian, he was the handsomest boy in the Eighteen Provinces. Being a Manchu of the blood-royal he apparently found Sian a very dull capital, and he undertook to enliven it by methods of his own. He scandalised the Sons of Han by riding out of the palace without an attendant, and by frequently remaining away until after the last paper lantern in the streets had flickered out in the darkness. A series of adventures gained for him the reputation of a Manchu Don Juan. Accompanied by several kindred spirits of his own age, he frequented the cafés and restaurants, and was on one occasion brought back in a mood made boisterous by lingering too long over a cup of rice-wine. Ta-a-ko was greatly admired by the mandarin of the palace. He never tired of telling me stories of the Crown Prince, although he said that Ta-a-ko's gaieties and frivolities had brought upon him the dislike of the "Great Empress Mother." The result of her displeasure was manifested in an Imperial edict that was published in Sian while I was there.

The edict emanated from Kai Feng, where the

court was resting for a few weeks before resuming the homeward journey to Pekin, and contained the announcement that Ta-a-ko was no longer heir to the throne of China. He had been dismissed from the court and had been ordered to return to his father in Turkestan. Ta-a-ko was such a good fellow and his wanting to have a good time was such a rare Chinese fault that these characteristics might have proved an antidote to hereditary narrowness and fanaticism. One can hardly help regretting that he will never sit cross-legged on the throne of the black-haired people. In order to propitiate the foreign allies Shensi's governor Tuan Fang was transferred to the richer and more important province of Hupeh and it was officially announced that his promotion was due to the fact that he had prevented the Boxers from murdering the missionaries. In Tuan Fang's place, a mandarin named Sheng was appointed Governor of Shensi. One night a party of young Manchu swells who were members of Ta-a-ko's set started out to paint Sian a tint of the Imperial red. They became very uproarious, they broke shop-windows and they succeeded in creating considerable disturbance. They were arrested by the governor's servants and locked up in the city jail. When they were brought before Sheng in the morning they treated him with great haughtiness. They told him that they were princes of the Empire, that their rank was much higher than his and that they did not recognise his author-

ity. Sheng promptly told the young princes that they were in Shensi now, a province where Manchus counted for very little, and that as Governor of old Shensi he proposed to enforce the laws. He then gave them a lecture on the proper conduct of princes and dismissed them with a severe reprimand, telling them that if they again disturbed the peace and quiet of his capital, they would be treated as common criminals. The princes hurried back to the palace and told their troubles to the Empress Dowager, but she only gave them another scolding and complimented the governor on his impartiality and courage.

From time immemorial it has been the custom for Emperors of China to hold audiences before daybreak. The greater the rank of the official the earlier is the hour at which he is received by his sovereign. While in Sian the sessions of the Empress Dowager's council were at four o'clock in the morning. Minor officials of the court were received between six and seven, while the Governor of Shensi and the mandarins were not admitted until ten o'clock. The routine business of the day was usually finished by noon, when the Empress Dowager passed upon the daily correspondence which Wang Wen Shau, of the foreign office, was carrying on with Li Hung Chang and Prince Ching in Pekin. As successor to Li Hung Chang, Wang Wen Shau is now minister plenipotentiary to the foreign powers. He was known in Sian as

a kindly, amiable old man who was never a violent partisan but was always devotedly attached to the Empress Dowager.

Among the familiar figures in the court-yards of the old viceroy's yamen were several men whom the Boxers had recognised as leaders and whose whereabouts were unknown to foreign generals. The fanatical hatred which these men entertained toward foreigners was no less extreme in Sian than it had been in Pekin. They urged the Empress Dowager to make another effort to rid China of the barbarians from the West, but fortunately the strange woman who rules the Middle Kingdom had learned a lesson, and for the time being she listened to the councils of the more moderate party. On one occasion Rung Lu is said to have delivered a sort of lecture on the pretensions of foreigners. He maintained that they all came from one small island, which was now almost depopulated because of the large number of its inhabitants that had emigrated to China. In order to deceive and cheat the Chinese the foreigners called themselves by the names of different nationalities, as French or German or English; they really were all of the same race and spoke but one language. According to Mr. Rung Lu, the foreigners have a custom of changing their nationalities as they would a disguise, so that a German on Monday is often a Frenchmen on Tuesday.

The belief prevails on our side of the world that

RUNG LU.

China is without newspapers, save the rather weak imitations of foreign publications that are printed in the treaty ports. For centuries one or more "Imperial Edicts" have emanated every day from the capital of the Empire. These edicts are quite different from what the name would imply in Europe or America. Besides containing copies of the general orders to the mandarins, the edicts constitute a record of all the official acts of the government. They give the reasons for every order and review each case. A compilation of the edicts is an excellent commentary on happenings in China and is a very fair substitute for a newspaper. The chief fault is the mortuary character of most of the news they contain. "We have this day cut off the head of the mandarin of so and so, because he stole from the taxes or was disloyal, or because he sympathised with a rebellion." This is the form of introductory paragraph most frequently found in imperial edicts. Following the statement that the mandarin has expiated his crimes is a neat little obituary notice, telling when and where he was born, the various positions he had held, and the names of his sons. As soon as an edict is issued it is immediately telegraphed to the governors of the provinces, and by them is disseminated among the subordinate mandarins. An official of the court has the privilege of publishing a monthly edition of the edicts in magazine form. Bound in yellow covers, they are sold to subscribers all over the

Empire. Scattered about the palace in Sian I found several copies of the edicts. They were mussed and crumpled very much as newspapers might be that have lingered over night in a club-room at home.

When the Emperor came to Sian, he entered by the east gate. For that reason it was necessary for him in leaving the city of his exile to pass through the west gate, although the route of the return journey to Pekin lay to the eastward through the province of Honan, and, as far as Tung Kwan, was the same over which he had previously travelled. It is considered a day of evil omen for China when the Emperor leaves a city by the same gate through which he has passed into it.

The procession on the day of departure was a triumph for the Empress Dowager. It was intended to impress the Sons of Han with the fact that China had again risen supreme among the nations. The barbarians had been compelled to retire; they no longer desecrated the capital, and the Son of Heaven could once more set up the dragon-throne in the city of the Manchus. Pekin precedents were discarded, and the Sianese, kneeling by thousands in the road, were allowed to gaze upon the faces of their sovereigns. Kwang Su led the procession in a yellow sedan chair. The Empress Dowager came next, followed by the Empress, the first wife of Kwang Su. Ta-a-ko, in a purple chair, was the fourth member of the party. Behind him

came a retinue of wives, princes and court-attachés, besides a body-guard of more than three thousand soldiers. Passing through the gate the procession made a circuit of the city outside of the walls and then began the long lingering stages of the homeward journey. Sheng, Governor of Shensi, was given the great honor of superintending the hundreds of luggage-carts which preceded the main procession by ten miles.

The young men of the court, who were still smarting under the rebuke Sheng had given them in Sian, devised a plan of revenge. They bribed a muleteer to allow a long train of donkeys to intercept the baggage-train from a cross defile in the mountains east of the Tung Kwan. So far as creating the confusion that Sheng's enemies desired, the plot worked admirably. The donkeys ran in and out among the carts, frightening horses and upsetting luggage. It was several hours before order was restored in the vanguard, and in the meantime the Empress Dowager arrived on the scene. She was furious at this delay in her progress, and sent for Sheng. Kneeling beside her chair, he said that this was the saddest hour of his life; he expressed a willingness to have his head cut off, then and there, if by doing so he could add to his sovereign's peace of mind. He did not deny that he was responsible for all the trouble, but he added that he knew the reason why the donkeys had tried to cross his carts. It was because the boys were at their old tricks again. The

Empress Dowager promptly pardoned Sheng. Her wrath was diverted to the boys. She talked to them about the pleasure it would give her to cut off the heads of several young Manchus if there were any more trouble with the baggage-train. Sheng and his carts encountered no more donkeys, and within three weeks afterward poor Ta-a-ko was cashiered.

As he approached the gate of a Shensi town, the Emperor usually alighted from his chair and knelt in the dust until the Empress Dowager had passed on the way to her yamen or kung kwan. For the five months consumed by the homeward journey the real capital of China was the yellow sedan chair of the contradictory old woman who was slowly moving across her dominions. Every day, with great regularity, came the edicts, always dated from the place where the chair happened to be resting. They showed that the Empress Dowager was certainly not leading an idle life. The question uppermost in her mind seemed always to be "Whose head will come off to-day?"

The Empress Dowager came to Shensi only a few months after all the missionaries had been expelled from it. Mission chapels had been burned and converts terrorised. About half the population sympathised with the Boxers, and the other half bitterly opposed them. The long-continued drought had made thousands homeless and desperate. Petty mandarins, taking advantage of the freedom from restraint that followed the disordered

state of the Empire were plundering and taxing their helpless subjects. Not since the Mohammedan rebellion had the old province been so turbulent and distressed.

When Tsz' Hi, Empress Dowager of China, left Sian the Boxer movement had been so effectually suppressed that missionaries could travel anywhere in the province with perfect safety, and were everywhere received far more cordially than they had ever been before. The people had gone back to their farms. Excessive "squeezing" by mandarins had been stopped by cutting off the heads of the principal offenders. Shensi was at "Peace."

The Empress Dowager is undoubtedly a very wicked woman. She richly deserves the title of "The Jezebel of China," by which she is often referred to in missionary reports; but if I were a Chinese resident of Sian, who, with Chinese eyes, had watched the progress of recent events in Shensi, I confess that I, too, should feel inclined to say "May she live a thousand years!"

CHAPTER XV

SHENSI'S FAMINE

DURING the three years that preceded July, 1901, more than two million men, women, and children died from hunger in Shensi. According to the "Statesmen's Year Book" for 1899, the population of the province was 8,432,193. Thirty per cent. of this number perished in the famine that came because rain failed. The reaping of so fearful a death-harvest in almost any other country would have been a subject of world-wide comment and the country that suffered would have received the universal sympathy of Christendom. But Shensi is so near to the edge of what the West calls the world that in the long perspective, anything that can happen in the old province is small and inconsequent. With the exception of a few contributors from England, through missionary channels, the only people who took the slightest interest in the starving yellow race were Americans. In the United States a fund was raised, which was forwarded to Shensi through a missionary committee, whose head-quarters were in Tientsin.

The primary cause of the famine was drought. In any agricultural community the absence of

rain for three years would have caused suffering and privation, but the death-harvest would never have followed, had it not been that Shensi was exceptionally remote and isolated. The province is enclosed on the south and west by high mountain ranges and separated from the coast by other mountains and wide plains, so that it is impossible to bring food into Shensi from without. When the resources of the province fail, there is no alternative but death from hunger for its people.

From the borders of Mongolia to the Wei Ho River the soil of Shensi is a kind of porous loess. When well watered it is of much the same nature as clay and is well adapted to the cultivation of millet and corn, which are the chief articles of food in the province, but the absorbent soil of the treeless plain will not retain water for any length of time, and with even a slight diminution of the rainfall, the ground turns to a dry, white powder, in which the crops parch and wither and die. Drought and famine are conditions not new to the hidden province. The history of almost every dynasty contains the record of a famine that raged in Shensi. In A.D. 595 the Emperor Yang-Kien was compelled to emigrate, with his court, from Sian to the province of Honan, because there was not food enough in Shensi even for the Emperor.

Previous to the recent famine the last showers of rain were in the spring of 1898, and from that time until May, 1901, not a drop of water fell anywhere

in sixty-three of the seventy-two Shens of the province. The small reserve of food that the farmers had stored in the granaries of the villages was soon exhausted. Wells and rivers, that helped to irrigate the plain, dried up. All the smaller tributaries of the Yellow River and the Wei Ho disappeared. The entire country became one vast, white, parched desert. With the failure of rain the provincial government realised that Shensi was once more face to face with an awful famine. With the limited means at their command they took steps to meet the emergency. Appeals for assistance were sent to other parts of the Empire. The response in money was generous, but money could not buy food when there was none for sale. Some even of the rich men in Shensi towns found it difficult to obtain flour and provisions at any price. The price of a bushel of wheat rose from 400 to 6,000 cash. Bread was sold at 120 cash, just ten times its value under ordinary conditions.

With the continued desolation of their fields, the farmers began flocking into Sian. During the winter of 1900–01 more than 300,000 villagers, desperate and starving, made their way to the capital of the province. Owing to a fear of bread riots, the Governor did not allow them within the city walls. The famine sufferers were compelled to live in fields in the suburbs. For shelter they dug caves in the clay banks by the side of the road, and they made their death lingering by eating coarse grass and

weeds. All around Sian when I visited it were these grim, blackened caves. They were nearly all empty. The men, women, and children who had lived in them were all dead. According to native statistics 130,000 perished from hunger in one suburb. On the morning of each day for three months more than 600 bodies were collected by the governor's servants, and were buried in a field near the eastern gate. As a result of famine-conditions a disease that seemed a combination of dysentery and cholera broke out in Sian, causing the death of hundreds of residents of the city, who had escaped the worst rigours of hunger.

And all the time food was becoming scarcer. By-and-by human flesh began to be sold in the suburbs of Sian. At first the traffic was carried on clandestinely, but after a time a horrible kind of meat ball, made from the bodies of human beings who had died of hunger, became a staple article of food, that was sold for the equivalent of about four American cents a pound. The trade in human flesh had assumed considerable proportions before it was summarily stopped by Tuan Fang, the Governor, who cut off the heads of three men who dealt in it.

Tuan Fang appointed a relief committee, whose members were prominent merchants and bankers of the city. They opened thirty-two soup-kitchens in Sian for the hungry in the suburbs. From the mandarins the committee obtained lists of destitute

families. The committee had charge of the 3,000,000 taels contributed from native sources during the three years of famine. The money came from the Imperial treasury in Pekin, from Shensi provincial funds, and from Chinese charitable societies. The relief funds were further augmented by the sale of degrees. That the government should resort to such a step is proof of the straits to which it had been reduced in contending with the hunger-cloud which overhung the country. Under ordinary conditions it is sometimes possible for a man to obtain his degree by bribing the official who conducts the examination, but, however it may be obtained, a degree is absolutely essential for an appointment as mandarin. At the direction of the Governor, degrees in Shensi were offered, without an examination, to anyone who would pay a certain amount to the famine-fund. Awful as were conditions in Sian, the suffering in the country was worse, if such a thing could be possible. Whole villages subsisted for a while on cats and dogs and horse-meat, and then slowly starved to death. In order to buy food the farmers sold first their scanty stock of furniture and farming tools, then the roofs of their houses, and, lastly, their children.

When Chinese parents, with all of their intense love for their little ones, can be induced to sell them, the worst and last phase of famine-horrors has been reached. There is always a market for children in China, and the demand is usually far greater than

the supply. Housemaids and women in domestic service in the interior towns usually receive no wages. Until they are married they are the property of their masters, who have purchased them when they were little girls. Since the advent of foreigners and treaty-port civilisation, girls are bought and sold to a worse fate than that of Chinese servants. In all parts of the Empire a traffic goes on more or less all the time in girls who are orphans, or who, because of their parents' opium habits, have become a public charge on the community.

Mencius taught that the worst crime a man can commit is to leave no son to worship at the ancestral altar. If a man is childless he must buy a boy, whom he brings up as his son, and who is bound to him by the same obligations of filial piety as though he were his own. But the same reason which makes some men willing to pay a high price for a little boy makes fathers very loath to part with their sons. Apart from his great love for him, every Chinese father likes to think that when he is dead the little boy now trudging beside him in the field will worship before a tablet to his memory. It is only in time of famine that a poor farmer who is the father of a large family will sometimes consent to sell one or two of his sons, to save the rest of his children from death by starvation. When the famine was at its worst in Shensi, men in carts appeared in Sian They were

speculators whose business was the buying of children in the famine-market. Starting from Sian as a headquarters for the trade, they made excursions into the surrounding country. From the dwellers in the caves and from the villagers they bought hundreds of children. The ordinary price of a little boy was about 2,000 cash, while a little girl could be purchased for half that sum. The children were bought at wholesale, and were sent away to be retailed all over China.

These were the sad conditions of old Shensi when the Empress Dowager and her ménage came to Sian. The coming of the Court was dreaded, because it meant 10,000 more mouths to feed from the ever-diminishing supply of food. But the "Jezebel of China" brought the first real relief that Shensi had known for three stricken years. Immediately upon her arrival she instituted between Sian and the cities of the south and east a system of government caravans, to bring supplies of food in quantities that had been impossible for the provincial government to obtain, with the limited means at its command. Besides providing for the soldiers and the attendants of the court, the caravans brought, in addition, a supply of corn and flour, whose sale in open market tended to relieve the hunger-suffering.

By a personal study of famine-conditions, the Empress Dowager discovered that the large contributions of money from native sources had done

little to relieve the distress of the people of the province. With her long experience of the peculiarities of mandarins she reached the conclusion that a part of the funds had been "squeezed" by the officials to whom they had been given for distribution. According to the story told in Sian, the Great Empress-Mother appeared one day at a meeting of her council, carrying in one hand ten taels of silver, and in the other a string of copper cash. "This is a riddle," she said, "which I want you to answer." When her councillors pronounced its solution impossible, she explained that the silver represented what had been given to the people of Shensi and the cash the amount they had received. To determine where the difference between the silver and the copper had gone, an examination of famine-accounts followed, that ended in cutting off the heads of three of the most prominent mandarins of the province. From that time famine-funds had immunity from "squeezing."

Early in May, 1901, the rain fell again in Shensi. It enabled some of the farmers to plant their fields. The rain was followed by an edict announcing that the famine was over and that no more contributions were needed from other parts of the Empire. But it was still five months to the harvest and the daily death-rate was nearly as large as ever, although the government caravans had caused a change in the situation. In Sian food brought from other provinces was now obtainable, but the villagers who

had survived the three years of famine were without means to purchase it. Soon after the first rainfall, the first American relief money was brought to Shensi by Mr. Duncan. The Empress Dowager heard of his coming, and expressed a wish that everything possible should be done to aid him. It was largely due to her approval that he received the co-operation and support of every official in the province, from the governor to the Shen mandarins. The laws of Shensi forbid the use of a public building by a foreigner, but that Mr. Duncan might not lack proper facilities for conducting the distribution of the famine-funds in his charge, the native relief committee placed at his disposal as an office and residence, a large building in the heart of Sian, the city from which less than a year before all foreigners had been expelled. Over the gateway of Mr. Duncan's house was placed a sign inscribed with the words "American kung kwan."

All of the thousands of taels at Mr. Duncan's disposal were distributed through Chinese channels in accordance with Chinese methods. The basis of his calculations of the extent of famine-suffering, were the lists that had been compiled by the native relief committee and which were placed at his disposal. Arranged in columns on the pages of a Chinese famine-list, are characters that represent the needy families of the district. The name of the husband and father always appears at the top

of the page. The women and children dependent upon him are referred to as "mouths" and are entered in the list by number and not by name. By men in his own employ, Mr. Duncan verified the accuracy of the lists of "mouths," and to the head of each family he gave a ticket entitling him to a share of the American famine-fund. The mandarin was then informed on what day the distribution would take place in his Shen. The head men of the villages notified all holders of tickets to assemble on the appointed day at some building which he designated for the purpose. These buildings selected for a famine-distribution were usually temples or yamens. They were always of an essentially Chinese character and were the last places on earth where, under ordinary conditions, a foreigner would be welcome.

At each public distribution the Shen Mandarin presided, order was maintained by his soldiers and servants, and the money was paid out by a representative of the relief committee in Sian. Mr. Duncan personally supervised each famine-distribution, and he held the mandarins to a strict account for every tael paid out; but he always acted on the principle that as the money was for Chinese, the men best qualified to manage the details of its distribution were Chinese officials. Besides this, Mr. Duncan believed in the Chinese on general principles and respected them; they on their part liked him, and as a result there was no prejudice against

foreigners, in the distribution of American famine relief funds in Shensi.

The transportation of the money from Sian to the place of distribution was one of the most difficult problems of the work. Cash strings were the only available medium by which the funds could be disbursed in small amounts. A string of cash whose value is about seventy cents weighs more than four pounds, so that the equivalent of comparatively few American dollars constituted a load for a cart drawn by two mules. To distribute $800 at Lintoun, fifty-two carts were necessary to carry the cash. The experiment was tried of disbursing the money in promissory notes issued by the local bank of the Shen where the distribution took place, but this method had to be abandoned, because the cashing at one time of so many notes caused runs on the banks that almost caused riots.

Through Anglo-Saxon channels the American money could get no nearer to Sian than Hankow. By arrangement with a Chinese bank at that place, relief funds were telegraphed in instalments to the banks in Sian, who at first demanded an exorbitant rate of exchange. When the Governor, Li Shao Fen, was apprised of the fact, he sent one of his secretaries down to the banking street, to say that His Excellency was pained to learn that the banks would rob his starving people, by charging a high rate of exchange on money that Americans had sent

to their relief; and that the next banker who demanded more than the ordinary rate would be punished. The bankers knew that punishments by the Governor, frequently ended fatally for the offender. They decided that their heads were worth more than the profits of exchange. After the visit of the Governor's secretary, the cost of sending money into Sian for famine purposes was very inconsiderable.

A distribution of American famine relief funds to the families who still lived in the caves took place while I was in Sian. The place designated by the governor was the Temple of the Five Sacred Mountains, the largest of all the city temples. When Mr. Duncan and I alighted from our carts at the appointed hour on the morning of the distribution, we found more than 3,000 men, women, and children huddled in the court-yard of the temple. They were all in rags; their hair was matted; their faces were emaciated, and wore that look of hopeless want that only hunger can stamp on human countenances. The temple-yard was divided into two parts by a kind of high fence which surmounted a stone platform extending from one side of the yard to the other. Waiting for us on the platform were the chairman of the relief committee, a score of mandarins, and about fifty soldiers and servants. The crowd were driven back into the rear yard, from which they were admitted in single file through a gate in the fence. As they passed our table we

gave to each bank notes in denominations of from 500 to 2,500 cash.

Such gratitude as these poor starving men and women of the old yellow race manifested I have never seen equalled anywhere in the world. Many of them wept as the brown paper bank notes passed from our hands to theirs. In the narrow space between our table and the line of soldiers, they one by one dropped on the stone floor and made pitiful attempts at kow-tows. The shi jang by my side seemed to be of the opinion that a kow-tow was no more than our due, but I told him that as an American barbarian I preferred to see men standing erect at all times, and at my request he put a stop to the kow-tows. The work of giving money to the hungry crowd lasted five hours, but after the last man with a bank note in his hand had disappeared through the temple gate, the mandarins would not allow Mr. Duncan and myself to leave until they had drawn up all the soldiers in line to salute us by dropping on one knee.

In the feeding of thousands of human mouths by the American dollars that the *Christian Herald* had collected there were no distinctions of race or creed or politics. Among the men and women in Shensi who received the cash strings were Boxers and Taoists and Mohammedans. They were all Chinese, they were human beings, and they were fed. Before the coming of the American money to Sian it is probable that two-thirds of the inhabitants

of Shensi had never heard of the United States. To-day, from one end of the province to the other, it is known as the one foreign nation that is really a friend, and whose people, though barbarians, are strangely kind. . .

CHAPTER XVI

AROUND ABOUT SIAN

TO get a better idea of the ravages of famine throughout the province of Shensi, I passed five days in an abandoned mission station in the town of San Yuan, about thirty miles north of Sian. Accompanied by a missionary who had assisted Mr. Duncan in his relief work, we made excursions from San Yuan out across the plain of Sian. The country gave evidences of a former dense population. Every quarter of a mile a mud village rose out of the white, treeless desert, which stretched away to the north, east, and west like a limitless ocean. The vast plain was silent. Along the old roads, all worn and sunken, we met no travellers. No farmers were in the fields. In some of the villages were groups of half-starved men and children, the only survivors of communities that had perished. The plain was silent because its inhabitants were dead. Only at rare intervals was a house with a roof visible anywhere. The thatch of which the roofs of Chinese houses are made always finds a ready market in the towns as fuel, and as a last resort before abandoning all hope the starving villagers had sold the shelter of their homes.

Besides ruined and deserted mud villages, the only objects which broke the monotony of the landscape were mounds which dotted the plain between Sian and the fords of the Wei Ho River. The mounds were built by men, but when or for what purpose is a mystery. The mounds were all pyramidal in shape. They were made of a kind of clay, apparently a different material from the loess of the plain. Their sides were covered with a verdure of coarse grass and low bushes. Although the action of time and the elements had partly obliterated the former angularity of the outline of the mounds, their original shape was still plainly discernible. They were all square pyramids, about eighty feet in height from the centre of the plane of the base to the apex. The four base lines of each pyramid are of equal length, usually about 300 feet. It seemed as though an intention were apparent in their construction to have the sides four square with the points of the compass. The road from Sian to San Yuan runs directly north, and as we passed a succession of mounds on either side of it, I noticed that we were always confronted by the face of the pyramid, and never by one of its corners. The base lines of its northern and southern sides were invariably at right angles with the road. I found also that, although scattered over an area of ten square miles, the corresponding sides of any two of the pyramids always faced in the same way. Although I did not test accurately their points of

direction, I am strongly of the opinion that lines drawn at right angles with the four bases of the sides of any of the pyramids would lead directly north, east, south, and west.

The mounds have always been held in great veneration by the people of the surrounding country. They are situated in the midst of a plain where until the famine every square foot of ground was in demand for cultivation, yet no crop was ever sown or reaped on the sides of the mounds. They are regarded as mysteries, and consequently it would be bad luck for any one to attempt to dig into them. The Sianese explain them by saying that they mark the burial-places either of some of the early emperors or of the great characters in Chinese history. It was formerly the custom when an emperor died to place his body in an immense tomb, in which his wives and several hundred of his servants were buried with him in order that they might accompany him to the spirit-world. Over the whole structure was built an immense mound. These tombs of emperors are found in various parts of China, usually near a city which was once the capital.

But to my mind this theory does not satisfactorily explain the mounds of the plain of Sian. More than most nations, the Chinese keep a careful record of their monuments. An accurate knowledge of the places where the great ones of antiquity are buried is part of the ancestor-worship of the

A PYRAMID OF SIAN PLAIN.

country. If each of the Shensi mounds covered the tomb of an emperor the fact would be generally known, and a tablet recording the fact would be placed near it. But such is not the case. No inscription of any kind is found near the pyramids. Grimly silent, they rise from the plain as though guarding some secret of the past too sacred even for the Sons of Han. The shape of the mounds, too, is another objection to the idea that they are the burial-places of emperors. Over an emperor's tomb was usually piled a huge heap of earth of indiscriminate size and shape that in time assumed a rounding oval form, not unlike a natural hillock. But the pyramid, or anything like it, was never attempted. The pyramid is rare in Chinese architecture, although the tapering octagonal tower of the pagoda may be an evolution from it.

A member of our party on the Han River was a scholar and teacher from Sian, who was exceptionally well informed on the history and monuments of Shensi. In speaking one day of the mounds of Sian plain, he said that they might have been the altars of the primitive religion that once prevailed all over China. I am not an archæologist, and I have never made a study of Chinese monuments, but I must confess that this explanation of the pyramids is the most reasonable I have ever heard. For several thousand years prior to the birth of Confucius, 551 B. C., Shang Ti, the One and Supreme God, was worshipped in China.

As the oldest province, Shensi would naturally contain more evidences of the former faith than any other part of the Empire. Can it be that the nameless pyramids which for centuries have pointed upward from Sian plain are a survival of the ancient universal faith that began with the race in Central Asia and found a manifestation in the pyramids of Egypt? It is not my intention to hazard a positive opinion on the subject. A conjecture is permissible in describing an unsolved riddle. Among the monuments of the past in China there are not a few riddles whose study might add greatly to the world's knowledge of many things. But it will be a long time before a solution of any of the riddles can be expected. They will never be even considered worth solving until the West learns that China is something more than a "Yellow Peril" and a "Mission Field" and a market for opium.

The Wei Ho River must be crossed twice on the way from Sian to San Yuan. The first crossing is made by a ferry and the second by a ford through the swift current. Ten miles to the westward of the ford the river dashes through a deep gorge, which it seems to have furrowed for itself below the surface of the plain. The water bubbles and foams between its narrow walls, but strong as is the current it is considerably shallower than formerly. Just above the point where the Wei Ho again emerges on the plain of Sian, are deep gulleys cut in the rock. They are now several feet above

GORGE OF THE WEI HO.—ANCIENT IRRIGATING TRENCH.

the stream, but they were once used as irrigating trenches, to divert the current across the surrounding fields.

Although the climate of Shensi is about the same as that of northern Ohio, the country north of the Wei Ho has long been famous for the production of cotton. Withered cotton plants were everywhere visible when I rode over the desert plain. Within a radius of twenty miles from San Yuan the only human beings I met who seemed to have been untouched by the famine were the twelve survivors of a village whose inhabitants had numbered almost a hundred. They were all cotton-spinners, who at the beginning of the drought had emigrated to the south, returning only when the famine was over. In one of the two rooms of the house of the head man was his loom. He explained that by working from sunrise to sunset he was able to weave enough cloth for a wholesale merchant in San Yuan to provide an income of about nineteen American cents a day. His family consisted of his wife and five-year-old son. They seemed very happy, and they were profoundly thankful at having escaped the famine.

As I watched the shuttle that he threw back and forth across the loom, I remarked upon the appearance of the bobbins from which the thread was unwound. "They look as if they were wound by machinery," I said. "And so they were," the spinner replied. "My bobbins come from America."

Besides the famine-fund, the cotton thread was the first link of communication between China and the United States that I had discovered anywhere in Shensi. In reply to my inquiries, the spinner told me that American cotton thread was better than any grown in Shensi, and could be bought for just about the same price. He accounted for its cheapness by the theory that the United States was an island not far from China. When I told him that the country from which the thread came was 18,000 li from the plain of Sian, he shook his head dubiously. "The thread would cost more," he said, "if it had to be brought such a long distance."

Before the famine San Yuan was a rich town of about 50,000 inhabitants. Its population, when I visited it, was reduced to less than 20,000. On a smaller scale, San Yuan's experience of the three years' drought was very similar to that of Sian. From the country round about thousands of men, women, and children flocked to San Yuan, vainly seeking escape from hunger. They nearly all died in the city to which they had fled for refuge. In an embankment against the outside of the city-wall the dead were buried. Enough earth was thrown over the bodies to conceal them, but not enough to protect them from the dogs, who always prowl about the walls of a Chinese city. In the embankment were holes, from which protruded skeletons and bits of clothing, marking the visits of the dogs of San Yuan.

Probably no one can endure suffering more patiently than a Chinaman, and no one forgets his suffering more persistently when it is past. It seems to be part of his striving for "Peace" to put out of his mind the recollection of anything that is unhappy or unpleasant. The inhabitants of San Yuan, which had been for three years the scene of an awful famine, might be expected to turn away from their city with a shudder, and to abandon it forever, but, instead, I found that nothing seemed farther from their thoughts than the famine. It was at an end, and they no longer even cared to talk about it. San Yuan is a centre of the cotton trade of north China. When it is remembered that the entire population numbers more than 300,000,000, and that 90 per cent. of this number wear cotton clothes, some idea can be formed of the volume of the cotton trade of the Empire. From San Yuan caravans of camels, laden with bales of cotton cloth, start for Kansuh Turkestan and Inner Mongolia. The failure of the cotton crop of Shensi did not seem to discourage the merchants of San Yuan in the slightest. They at once began filling their orders with imported cotton cloth. Their warehouses were filled with bales of cotton cloth woven in England and the United States.

As Wang and I stood one afternoon in the road outside of the city-wall, looking at the ghastly embankment, we were forced to step aside to make way for a long line of camels, that were swaying

along towards the south gate. The camels were carrying cotton bales. Wang pointed to them, and said, "It is marked in the English language." I looked, and, sure enough, the labels on the bales showed that to old San Yuan, which probably not more than six white men had ever seen, the camels were bringing the product of Fall River, Massachusetts.

CHAPTER XVII

SOME SHENSI MONUMENTS

SCATTERED all over China, by roadsides, in village streets, and in temple court-yards are granite tablets carved deep with inscriptions. None of them are modern as the West reckons modernity. Few were erected since the Declaration of Independence was signed in Philadelphia, but some are much older than others. Most of them record the virtuous deeds of mandarins, who lived and died during the last two dynasties, but occasionally one meets with an inscription that tells of something that happened long ago; a bit of philosophy suggested by some incident in history; a memorial of an illustrious Emperor, or sometimes an inscription on a spot made famous by a great event, like a battle or the birth of a sage. Stone tablets are an institution peculiar to China. Much of the so-called ancestor-worship is really only a resort to this national method of raising an enduring monument to previous generations.

In the carvings on the grey stone, far more than in the ponderous and stilted literature the soul of the Chinese speaks. Besides recording events for public interest, the tablets often serve as reposi-

tories of the best thoughts of individuals. When to one of the old yellow race, whom we like to cartoon, there comes a great thought he weighs and measures it. If it stands the test of his reflection, he treasures it silently for years, perhaps forever. He regards it as an illumination of his soul by a higher power. It becomes his ambition to transmit to those who shall follow after him the one great idea that has flashed across his life. On a stone by a roadside, he has his soul's light carved where men may see it. Usually it finds expression in an epigram or a verse of poetry, but occasionally it is pictured in the carving of a flower or the outlines of a face.

To me the tablets of Shensi always possessed a strange charm. They seemed a part of those strong, deep repressed fires that, underneath the mask of national stoicism, have smouldered at the foundation of the Chinese nature since time began, and which may some day flash forth with a concentrated brilliancy that will startle the world. Of some of the tablets it is possible to obtain impressions made in lampblack on sheets of tissue paper. These are sold by priests to pilgrims, who hang them on the walls of their homes. A few of these tablet-impressions I purchased at different places on my journey through Shensi.

The Emperor Hung Wu, who in 1368 founded the Ming dynasty, saw in a dream the sacred mountain of Hua. Later he visited it and

THE DREAM OF HUNG WU.

found the way to the summit, to be the same that had appeared to him in his sleep. Hung Wu's was one of the most strenuous lives in Chinese history. He overturned the dynasty that Kublai Khan had founded and he broke the power of the Mongols. His armies subdued Corea and Burmah. He was a warrior and a man of action, yet he always regarded his dream as the illumination of his life. The picture of the sacred mountain, as it was indelibly stamped on Hung Wu's memory, was carved on a stone tablet in the yard of the temple at the base of the mountain. The white dotted line is the winding, difficult trail up the mountain-side. The figure of a man in the various stages of the ascent is Hung Wu in the garb of an ordinary pilgrim. The white spots represent the course of the rabbit which was the Emperor's guide in his dream-pilgrimage. Around the picture is carved his description of his experience in his own words.

"*How sublime the height of the Western mountain.*

I once dreamed that I was there.

When I was still distant about a hundred li, suddenly the mountain-top appeared to burst its covering of clouds and to pierce the heavens.

It glittered with all the five colours.

In a moment, I know not how, I found my way to the summit, whence I looked down on a sea of peaks clothed with green pines and rugged rocks.

For a moment I lost the trail of the white rabbit (that was leading me), but a pair of white doves came down to meet me.

I was making the circuit praying aloud when some one knelt before me and said:

'Be reverent, for Shang Ti (the Supreme God) is near you.'

I heard and bowed my head in worship."

On another tablet in the same old temple-yard at Hua ih is a copy of the character meaning Happiness, which was made several hundred years ago, by a flourish of the brush of a Chinese general named Sieh. The Chinese idea of flourishes and curves differs greatly from ours. Scholars and thoughtful men have a curious habit in a moment of introspection of making idealised characters with a marking-brush. The mood of a Chinese at such a time is far different from that of an American school-boy attempting to write his name in flourishes. The man with the ink-tablet and the marking-brush is trying to interpret his soul. He selects at random any well-known character of the alphabet and then allows his brush to swing in curves over the paper, trying, as far as possible, to keep his own personality out of his writing. I have seen a Chinaman sit silently for hours in a moment of illumination, while his brush wanders dreamily over the piece of brown paper before him. Only very rarely, sometimes not more than once or twice in his lifetime, does he succeed in making a character in which he sees his soul reflected. This can happen only when the ego is completely eliminated and it is his soul and not himself that makes the flour-

THE HAPPINESS OF SIEH.

ish. Such a character is on the tablet of Sieh. Care has been taken in the carving to preserve the hair-brush marks of the original. A friend of Sieh's named Hew Kwo Tung was delighted with the character. An inscription in one corner of the tablet says,

"General Sieh, in a joyous mood, wrote this word, happiness, giving it so much expression that I have thought fit to have it cut on stone to afford pleasure to others.— Hew Kwo Tung."

Another conception of the word happiness is a monogram on a tablet erected by a man named Chen Toun. The monogram consists of the character for *mouth* with a *field* to supply wants and a third character signifying *divine protection.*

In a park in the southeastern corner of Sian is a row of long, one-story, brick sheds. These comprise what is known as The Hall of Tablets, famous all over China as the oldest collection of stone memorials of the past. The Hall was rebuilt and the tablets placed in their present positions during the Han dynasty about 100 B.C., but some of the granite slabs stood in a previous collection in Sian long before that time. Like many other things in Shensi, the beginnings of the Hall of Tablets belong to the period of legends and not to history. The sheds are about six in number and each is about 500 feet long. Side by side in rows, with only sufficient space for a man to walk be-

tween them, are tablets of every sort, shape, and description. Here are kept the memorials of the rulers and kings and sages and emperors of China from Fuhi to the Tangs. It was the Hall of Tablets in Sian that gave the suggestion for the "Hall of the Mings" in Pekin. But the monuments in the Sian Hall are not confined to memorials of men. It contains thousands of tablets of all kinds that are entitled to a place in the long aisles because of their especial merit or interest, in somewhat the same way that exceptionally fine paintings might be selected for a national art gallery.

In order to obtain admission to the Sian Hall, the carvings on a tablet must be well executed and the calligraphy of the inscription must be perfect. Chief of its treasures in Chinese eyes are the original thirteen classics of Confucius. They once formed the imperishable library of the Kuo Tze Chien, the oldest university in the world, which still exists in a decadent form. "It was in its glory before the light of science dawned on Greece and when Pythagoras and Plato were pumping their secrets from the priests of Heliopolis." * When in the course of centuries all of Chinese learning and literature came to centre about the writings of Confucius, a monument to the great sage as a basis for a university library was carved in stone and set up in the Hall of

* The Lore of Cathay, by Dr. W. A. P. Martin, page 371.

Tablets in Sian. Once before in the reign of Chung the wall builder, all the Confucian books that the Government could seize had been destroyed, and, largely to prevent the recurrence of such a calamity, stone was selected as the material in which to preserve the greatest treasure of the library. As the Kuo Tze Chien is under the patronage of the Emperor, it was transferred to Pekin when that city became the capital, and, in imitation of the stone library of Sian, the thirteen classics were inscribed on stone columns in front of the present university buildings.

Anyone possessed of an adequate knowledge of the Chinese language and literature could find few things more delightful than to spend weeks in studying the old gray slabs in the Sian Hall of Tablets. On the afternoon when with Wang I visited it, we secured the services of a Buddhist priest as guide. A number of Chinese, evidently students or sight-seers, were scattered along the aisles reading the inscriptions. Their deportment was very similar to that of a well-behaved crowd at a picture exhibition at home. Everyone spoke in low tones and moved about as quietly as possible. Even with my ignorance of the language in which the inscriptions told their stories, I readily understood the hush that the tablets inspired. Apart from their antiquity there seemed to me a cold beauty in some of the outlines on the stones that made commonplace comment sound jarring.

From a man whose trade it was to make rubbings of the inscriptions, I bought reproductions of a few tablets that especially attracted me as I passed them. A large oblong tablet was covered for the most part by a series of ponderous proverbs like

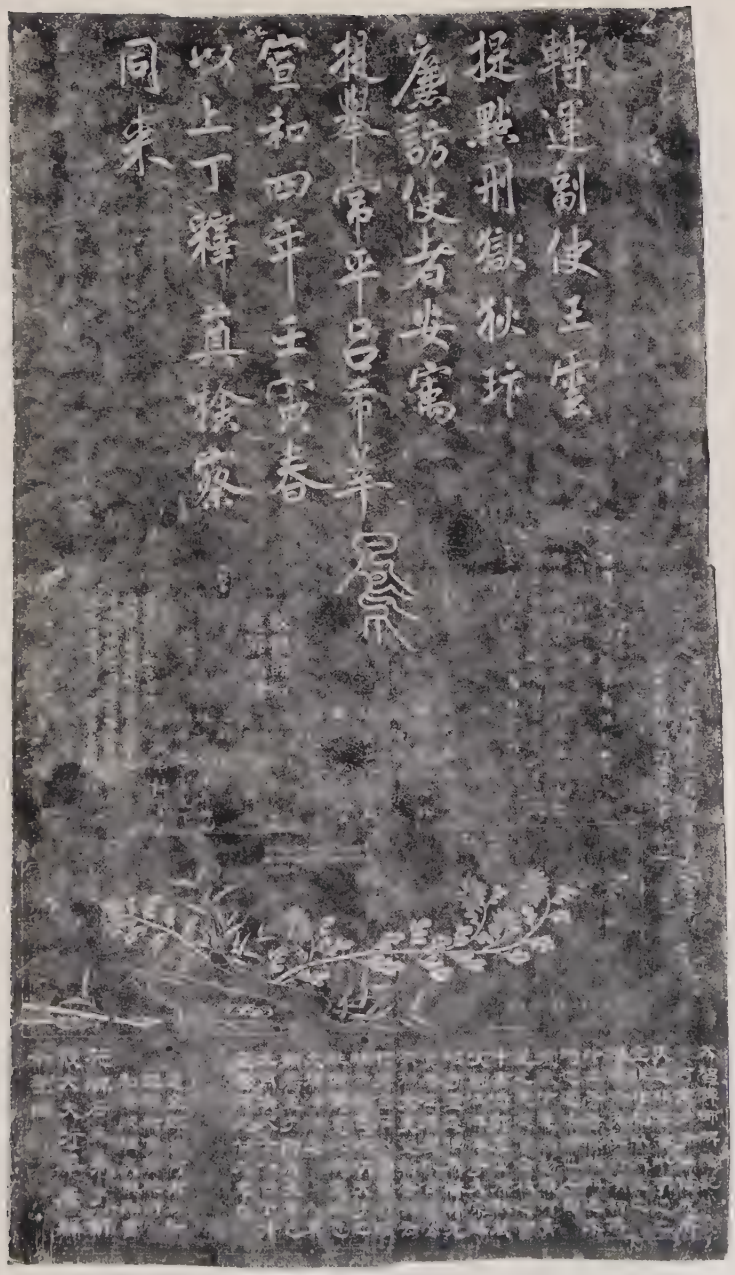
Truth is not confined to speech, but the use of speech is to reveal truth, and

The void has no form, but form reveals the void.

But mortised into the centre of the slab was a panel that had nothing to do with the proverbs. On the panel was pictured a spray of chrysanthemums and bamboo branches. In spite of the difficulty of portraying flower petals on coarse stone, the delicacy of the outline was so perfect that no one who saw it could help an involuntary expression of the sentiment written in verse around the chrysanthemums:

How exact their resemblance,
Their whiteness rivals the snow,
And you almost smell their fragrance,

and the signature of the engraver, *Chang Tai Ho of Kurgin.* The tablet must at one time have been quite famous because several pilgrims, nearly all of them mandarins, have recorded, near the top of the stone, their names and the fact that they had visited it. A date on the tablet shows that it was placed in its present place A.D. 679, in the



TABLET OF THE CHRYSANTHEMUMS.

twenty-ninth year of Kau Tsung. This emperor was the husband of Wu How. When Chang's chisel carved the chrysanthemums, she was the dominant power in Sian and in China. It may be only an idle fancy, but more than once, as I have looked at the lamp-black impression of the picture of the white flowers that bloomed twelve centuries ago, I have believed that it was Wu How herself who had the panel mortised into the centre of the slab. It was not like a man—not even a Chinese man—to break the monotony of dreary old proverbs with an irrelevant bouquet. It looks to me like the work of a woman. And Wu How, like her successor on the dragon throne to-day, although an Empress and a "Jezebel," was still a woman.

Another tablet rubbing in the Siam Hall was a portrait of the Buddhist apostle Tama, who lived about two centuries after the Christian era. In accordance with Chinese ideas of propriety, Tama sits on his halo instead of wearing it around his head. The picture shows him in an attitude of meditation, contemplating a bowl of incense in his lap. The inscription reads,

An original likeness of the patriarch Tama. It was drawn on paper with a faithful hand, but paper and ink cannot . . . resist the tooth of time. Hence we have it cut on stone.

Fung Ti drew the portrait of Tama, of which this is a stone reproduction. It is only fair

to suppose that Fung Ti had never heard of curve harmony, yet he succeeded in having the sweep of Tama's mantle and the drapery of his sleeves in perfect accord with the under lines of his face. Neither had Mr. Fung Ti ever studied impressionist poster methods of portraying hair; and yet Tama's ringlets are all a series of interwoven circles.

The only object in Sian that has to any considerable extent attracted the attention of the Western world is the tall granite slab called the Nestorian Tablet. In the discussions of which it has been the subject ever since its discovery, nearly three hundred years ago, such men as Voltaire, Renan, Abbé Huc, and Legge have participated. As a proof that the Christian religion is not new in China, but was introduced into Shensi A.D. 635, the Nestorian tablet has always been a very useful argument for missionaries; they have stoutly defended its authenticity against the scepticism of some antiquaries like Professor Salisbury of Yale College, who published an article in 1853 to prove that the Nestorian Tablet was a forgery. The more recent researches, however, of Legge and Wylie have established, beyond all reasonable doubt, that the Nestorian Tablet is what Chinese scholars have always regarded it, a truthful record of the first Christian mission in China. But my visit to the famous tablet convinced me that very few of the learned missionaries or laymen who have written about it had ever visited it.

TAMA.

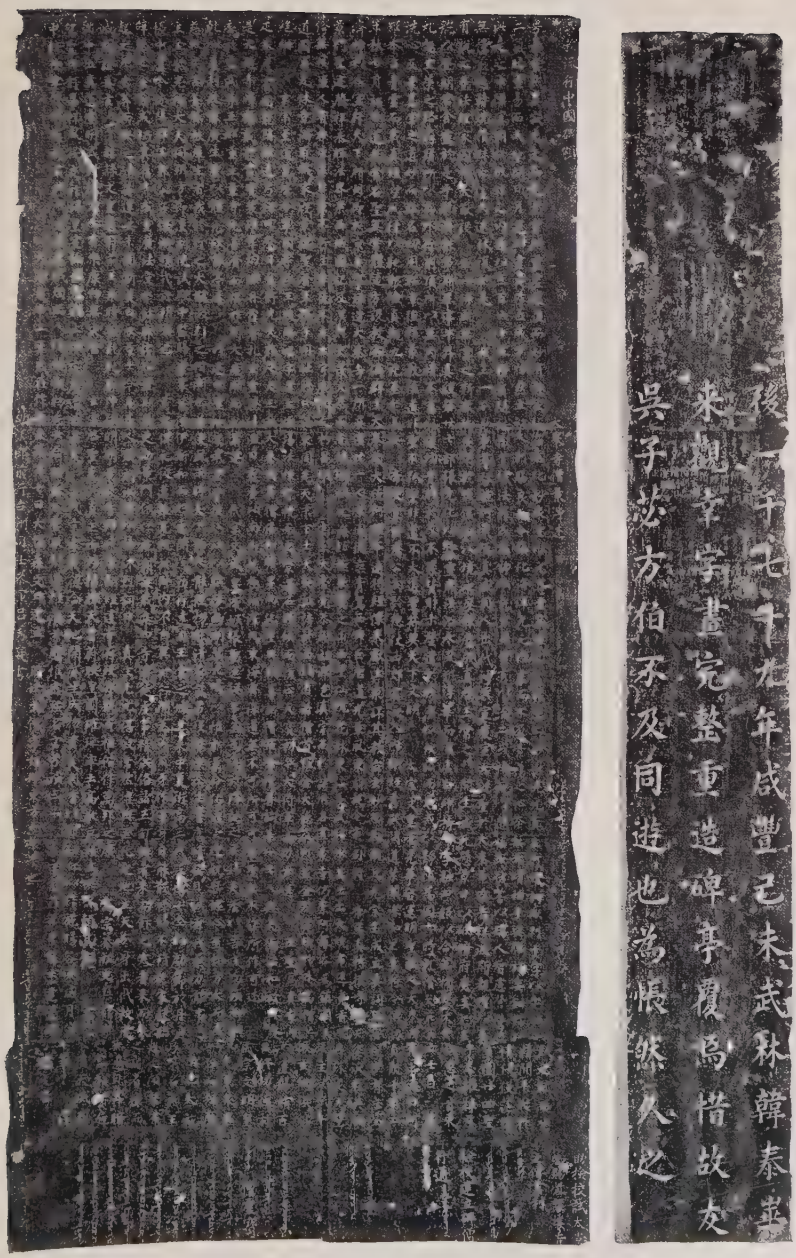
The Nestorian Tablet was first mentioned in the "History of the Great and Renowned Monarchy of China" by Alvarez Semedo, Roman Catholic procurator of the provinces of China and Japan. He told of the discovery of the monument by workmen, who were excavating for the foundations of a building in Sian in 1625. Semedo says that the Governor of Shensi "caused it to be placed upon a fair pedestal under a small arch sustained by pillars at each end thereof."* Abbé Huc, in his description of the Nestorian Tablet, says that he had been informed by Jesuit missionaries in Sian that a pagoda had been built over the monument, and Williamson, in "Journeys in North China," speaks of the Nestorian Tablet being imbedded in a wall. None of these descriptions give the slightest idea of the present condition of the tablet, as I saw it, and as it can be seen by any one in Sian who will take the trouble to walk to a neglected field, about a mile beyond the western gate of the city.

At the back of the field, some distance from the road, is a small dilapidated Taoist temple; in front of it are scattered heaps of mouldy brick and broken stone columns, which may or may not be the ruins of the Nestorian cathedral. In the midst of the ruins are three tablets, side by side. They are not protected either from vandals or the ele-

* Hsian past and present, published by North China Herald, Shanghai, page 13.

ments, but are merely mounted on stone tortoises after the fashion of many Chinese tablets. Two of the three are only commonplace memorials of mandarins. On the centre tablet, higher than the others, a small Greek cross is visible near the top, and this is the Nestorian Tablet. Under the cross are three short columns of Chinese characters, which constitute a heading to the inscription that follows. The heading may be translated, "The eulogistic verses on the stone monument commemorating the diffusion of the illustrious religion in the Middle Kingdom, with prefatory notices."* The greater part of the inscription that follows is in Chinese, but it also contains a few supplementary paragraphs in Syriac, a language now unknown in China. After a long exposition of Christian doctrine, including the birth of Christ, who is called "Ta Tsin," the inscription says that during the reign of the Emperor Tai Tsung (A.D. 627–649) a man of the "highest virtue" named Olupun came to Sian from Syria. He brought with him the "True Scriptures," which he expounded to the Emperor with the result that Tai Tsung issued a proclamation beginning, "Systems have always the same name, sages have not always the same personality." The proclamation declared Olupun's "system" to be "helpful to all creatures and profitable to men."

* The short extracts from the inscription on the Nestorian tablet, that I have quoted here are taken from Professor Legge's translation contained in "Christianity in China," Trübner & Co., London, 1888.



THE NESTORIAN TABLET.

According to the tablet, the succeeding reign of Kao Tsung was a period of great prosperity for Christianity in China, and one would almost infer from reading the inscription that the Emperor himself was a convert to it. "He caused monasteries of the illustrious religion to be erected in every one of the Prefectures." The persecutions of Wu How are tactfully passed over in the inscription with the statement that the "Buddhists, taking advantage of their strength, made their voices heard," and "some inferior officers greatly derided the Nestorians, slandering them and speaking against them." During the succeeding reigns of the eighth century, the new religion made such headway, so the inscription narrates, that a large part of the population of Shensi must have become Christian. The inscription concludes with a fulsome eulogy of the reigning Emperor Chien Chung (780–783), and one of his ministers named I-sze, who was originally a Buddhist priest from India, but who apparently had been converted to Christianity.

Chinese antiquaries hold the Nestorian Tablet in great veneration as an historical curiosity, and rubbings of the main part of the inscription are easily obtainable in Sian, but impressions of the top of the monument containing a picture of the cross are not for sale anywhere. I had to hire a man to make the rubbing that is reproduced on the opposite page. I also obtained an impression of a little inscription on the side of the tablet which, so far as I

have been able to discover, has escaped the attention of all of the eminent commentators on the monument. Dr. Martin has translated this supplementary inscription for me, as follows: "In the reign of Hien Fung, 1079 years after the erection of this monument, it was visited by Han Tai Hua, of Wulin, who caused the pavilion to be rebuilt. I grieve that my deceased friend, Governor Woo, could not be with me on this occasion." Hein Fung was an emperor of the present dynasty, who reigned from 1851 to 1862. The inscription may mean that during this period the tablet stood in a pavilion, in the wall of which Williamson saw it when he visited Sian in 1866, and, furthermore, that Han Tai Hua's pavilion was the successor of the former one referred to in earlier descriptions of the tablet.

The most common criticism of the Nestorian Tablet by men sceptical of its authenticity is the question, What became of the Nestorians? The sudden disappearance of their converts, their 3,000 priests and their monasteries, caused hardly a ripple in the stream of Chinese history. An edict issued in 841 by the Emperor Wu Tsung explains why they disappeared. Wu Tsung was a fanatical Taoist, who persecuted Buddhists and Nestorians alike. "As to the religions of foreign nations," says his edict, "let the men who teach them, as well as those of Ta Tsin . . . be required to resume the ways of ordinary life and their un-

THE CROSS THAT SURVIVED.

substantial talkings no more be heard." The fate of the Nestorians does not seem to me to be a matter difficult of conjecture. Like every other foreign-born influence that has been left to itself to battle with the traditional conservatism of Shensi, the Christianity of the eighth century was simply dissolved in its environment as easily as the waters of a spring might lose themselves in the sands of the desert. When placed under the ban by the Government, Nestorians became Chinese again, and the "illustrious religion" was lost in the civilisation of the Sons of Han.

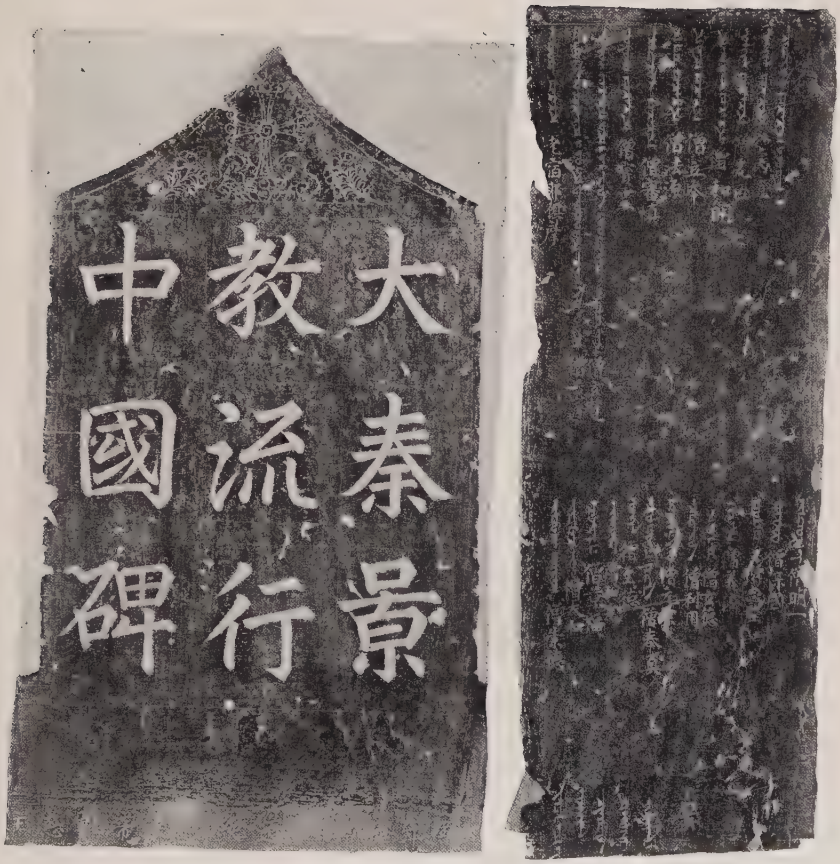
But the cross on the stone survived.

CHAPTER XVIII

THROUGH THE TSINGLINGS

IT was in the last week of November that Mr. Duncan and I began our journey from Sian back to "civilisation." The climate at that season, in North China, was too cold to permit of our return over the route by which I had come. The only way possible was down the Han River to Hankow, nearly six hundred miles to the southward. From the leader of a caravan we learned that the Han was then navigable from Lung Ku Chai, a town only one hundred and twenty miles distant, but reached by a mountain-trail so difficult that seven days were considered necessary for the journey on the back of a Chinese pony. Business that demanded my attention in Shanghai made a speedy return to the coast necessary for me, but several days more were necessary for the completion of Mr. Duncan's work in Sian. We therefore decided to attempt the seven days' ride in five. I knew that it meant some desperate travelling, but there was no help for it, and we made our preparations accordingly.

We secured from the Shen mandarin an escort of six soldiers, mounted on ponies that were



THE NESTORIAN TABLET.

HAPPINESS WITH DIVINE PROTECTION.

supposed to be possessed of exceptional endurance and strength. Two days before our departure from Sian, Wang started with our luggage on three mules for Lung Ku Chai, with orders to wait there for our arrival. We carried with us, in our pookas, only two cans of beef, a few cans of condensed milk, and three bars of chocolate. It was out of the question to divide the journey to Lung Ku Chai into systematic stages in the short time we had allowed to accomplish it, and we were prepared not to depend upon kung kwans for shelter, but to ride as far as we could every day, staying at the inn of the village, which we happened to reach at sundown. In our party was a Chinese scholar of Sian, who had been appointed by the governor of Shensi to go to Shanghai to study foreign methods of education. The mandarin of the palace called on me the evening before we left, to say good-bye. "Some day," he said, "I may visit the barbarian countries, and if I do, I shall try to see you." I am sure that he thought that all the countries of the world, outside of China, combined, amounted to less than the province of Shensi, but for all that he was a very good friend, and I sincerely hope that his head is still on his shoulders.

A cold north wind was whirling the dirt of Sian streets into dust eddies on the morning when we climbed on our ponies in front of the "American kung kwan" and clattered over the stone pavements through the south gate. Across the plain to the

southeast, stretched the white road ending near the horizon edge in the high, blue mountains of the Tsingling range, which forms the southern boundary of the plain of Sian. The higher peaks were covered with snow, and flashed in the sunlight of the morning.

The Tsinglings are the water-shed of China. Near their crest was one of the sources of the Han River, whose windings we were to follow to the Yang tse and to the sea. About half a mile beyond the gate of Sian we found a troop of cavalry drawn up by the side of the road awaiting us. Their leader was an elderly man whose rank as a military mandarin was indicated by his red button and horse-tail cockade. As we approached, the soldiers dismounted and, standing at their ponies' heads, made a salute by dropping on one knee. The mandarin prostrated himself in the dust and then, rising, took hold of Mr. Duncan's stirrup. He said that he had been sent by the Governor, Li Shao Fen to carry his farewell to his "friend," the "missionary of Sian," who had done much for Shensi and who had laboured to feed its starving people. By the side of the road, about an hour after leaving Sian, we passed a little temple that was in nowise different from thousands of other little places of worship in Shensi. An inscription over the entrance said: "On this spot the great Fuhi was born." From the indifferent way in which a soldier pointed it out to me it was hard

to realise that Fuhi was less recent than Washington.

By nightfall we had reached the little town of Lan tien, at the base of the mountains. At the inn where we spent the night we were visited by two mandarins. One was the magistrate of the town and the other came from another district some ten miles away. A few days before, an Imperial edict had been promulgated at Sian ordering all the mandarins of the province to introduce "New Learning" into the curriculum of the schools under their jurisdiction. New Learning is the general term employed in China to denote the systems of education of Europe and America, including a study of geography and the history of nations other than China. New Learning has for several years been a bone of contention between the liberal and anti-foreign factions in the government, and until recently it met with the strong opposition of the Empress Dowager. But either as a means of conciliating the missionaries and foreign ministers, or because recent happenings had convinced her of the need of a change in educational methods she had allowed this remarkable edict to emanate from her sedan-chair on the homeward journey.

The edict caused almost a panic among Shensi mandarins, who to a man were opposed to New Learning in every form. The object of the visit of the two mandarins at Lan tien was to consult with Mr. Duncan as to the best way of introducing New

Learning as speedily as possible. It was their evident belief that the little good in any especial knowledge that barbarians possessed could be acquired by a Chinaman within a few weeks. They asked where they could obtain text-books for the use of children in the schools. Mr. Duncan offered to send to the two mandarins several copies of different Chinese school geographies and histories, from which they could make a selection. This offer they politely declined. "Oh, no," said one of our visitors, "we read only books in Wen li (the official dialect), and anything written by foreigners would contain so many errors of language that it would be really distasteful to us; besides, no books of New Learning could teach us anything. Our Emperor has directed that some forms of foreign knowledge shall be taught in the schools, and we must obey his command, but as mandarins and gentlemen we wish to have nothing to do with it." The conversation of the two mandarins at Lan tien is an excellent example of the spirit in which the much-talked-of "educational awakening" is received in the interior of the Middle Kingdom.

The approach to the Tsinglings gives no indication of their difficulties. The plain, as level as a table, extends in unbroken monotony to the base of the mountains. Without any preliminary rise of ground, the rut-worn road narrows into a path only wide enough for a pony or mule, and then suddenly takes a sharp turn upward. The transition from a

level to the ascent is so abrupt that one is almost unprepared for the lurch backward in the saddle that he receives as his pony begins to climb. After about fifteen minutes our ponies began to lather and to pant painfully. As we reached an exceptionally steep quarter of a mile the shijang dismounted and cutting his pony sharply with the whip, seized him firmly by the tail. The rest of the party followed the shijang's example, and in single file we were dragged up the mountain-side. This manœuvre was repeated many times a day during our journey through the mountains. In fact, a passage through the Tsinglings might be described as China seen from a pony's tail.

A certain amount of judgment and a knowledge of the methods of ponies is necessary, however, for this method of travel. A horse in China has a happy faculty of kicking on very slight provocation. It is safe to take hold of his tail only when the road is so steep and rocky that were he to lift his hind legs from the ground long enough for a kick he would fall over a precipice or slip backward. The pony realises the danger of his position quite as well as the man he is pulling up the mountain-side; he makes no protest until level ground is reached, when he invariably kicks vigorously. When a line of travellers is toiling upward in single file, each man looks anxiously around his pony's flanks, at the shijang, who is in the lead. As he approaches a temporary respite in

the climb, he gives a sharp "Hi" and lets go of his pony's tail. Instantly all the rest follow his example, at the same time stepping well away from the hoofs in front of them. One by one, as the ponies reach the level, they kick and rear and plunge; then they settle down again and are ready for the next climb.

On the summit of the first mountain we paused to take a last look at the plain. It lay spread out below us like a huge map, seamed with white roads and dotted with mud villages. Across it, to the northward, twisted the old Wei Ho on its way to join the Yellow River at Tung Kwan. Far away to the northwest the gray walls and towns of Sian were ruggedly outlined against the intense blue of the Shensi sky. Steep and rugged as was the trail which we were following, men had come and gone over it since Fuhi took his first toddling steps on that loess plain five thousand years ago. Hundreds of generations had looked on that land at the base of the Tsinglings. But they were nearly all children of the Yellow race, all "Sons of Han." To the West it was still a hidden country.

The dense population of China is left behind when one plunges into the mountains of South Shensi. The one trail passes through a wilderness in which the signs of human habitation grow fewer and fewer the farther one advances into it. After leaving Lan tien, there are no villages, and between the isolated caravan towns are only a few scattered farm-houses. These, too, disappear

after the second day of the journey, and for hours the traveller rides and climbs and slips through solitudes as unbroken as in the most newly discovered country of the world. In the loneliness of the mountain defiles it is really a relief to hear the distant tinkle of the bell of an approaching caravan. It is almost the only sound that breaks the stillness of the Tsinglings. The wilderness is treeless. The mountain-sides are covered with coarse underbrush and grass. There are no whispering pines and no singing birds. The only winged things are a few flocks of crows. As far as the crest of the range there are no streams of any size, and the sameness of the mountains prevents in this part of them any beauty of landscape.

A number of men on foot are to be met with in the trails. Hanging from sticks across their shoulders, are baskets of merchandise that they carry hundreds of miles from the Yang tse into Shensi. Occasionally, too, one encounters processions of lumber-carriers. The round, unhewn timbers are strapped together in the form of a letter A; through the apex the carrier sticks his head and then struggles with his load up the mountain-side. In the fastnesses are several bands of robbers. Some of them are political criminals who have been outlawed, and to whom brigandage is the only possible means of earning a livelihood. Because of the robbers, travellers on foot never go through the mountains alone, but always in groups

for mutual protection. Even mule caravans never travel at night, and two or three of the muleteers are always armed with broadswords. Shen towns in the Tsinglings are dreary little clusters of houses along the trail. The two or three hundred inhabitants earn a livelihood by giving shelter and food to passing caravans.

The most important building in every town is the inn. It is always large and noisy and dirty. A peculiarity of Chinese muleteers is their ability to get along with very little sleep. After their evening meal they gather about a candle in one of the rooms of the inn, where they play dominoes and gamble for cash until long after midnight. When the caravan starts at daybreak few of the drivers have had more than four hours sleep, yet they are always cheerful and talkative, and ready for another twelve hours of clambering and mule-beating. As we were making a dash through the mountains it was necessary for us to leave the inn every day an hour before sunrise. Our horses would be saddled and brought into the road in front of the gate, and we would issue from our rooms as noiselessly as possible, stepping over the prostrate bodies of drivers sleeping beside their mules on the hard ground of the court-yard.

Our noon meal was usually eaten near some farm-house. From the farmer we could buy a little rice and a few eggs, and from his well we could obtain enough water to make three cups of choco-

late. Tired and faint as we often were after seven or eight hours' climbing and riding, we never dared to linger long over our food in the middle of the day for fear of a stiffness in our joints that would prevent our covering an equal distance in the afternoon. Inns and brick beds soon lost all their horrors. The most delightful sight of the day was the group of dirty houses where we were to find shelter for the night. After two cups of tea, a bowl of rice, or some canned beef, we would crawl into our sheepskins and sleep as only exhausted barbarians can, until we felt the touch of the shijang's awakening hand in the morning. We always started by the light of the stars, and very beautiful it was to see them, one by one, flicker out as the rays of the sun shot up from behind some mountain-top.

There are a few jaguars in the mountains, and some wolves of whose depredations great stories are told. Shensi inn-keepers, after the fashion of their guild the world over, take great delight in telling their patrons of marvellous happenings in the country where their inns happen to be. In such conversations, wolves are a favourite subject. I have listened to accounts of how wolves entered villages and carried away children, of how they attacked caravans, and of how they prowled around temples and hid behind idols in a search for unwary pilgrims, but I never yet heard of a wolf seeking his prey in an inn. Inn-keepers never laid the scene of

their stories in one of their own taverns. Bold and bad as Shensi wolves may be, they are sensible enough to avoid entering one of the awful inns of the country.

I never met any wild wolves in the Tsinglings, but the curious dogs about the farm-houses always looked to me like wolves that had been tamed. As you ride up to a mountain farm-house, three or four animals, that seem for all the world like American prairie wolves, come running out to meet you. Their colour is a brownish gray. They have pointed noses and bushy tails. They look genuine and ferocious, and you wonder whether their hunger can be stayed with a can of corned-beef while you make a hurried dash for life, but as you dismount and make their acquaintance, you find that their manners are not at all wolfish, but that they are just simple, kindly dogs who rub up against your legs and who do not share their master's prejudice against foreigners.

On the morning of the third day we came upon a little temple by the roadside; over its arched entrance were carved the words, "Here the waters divide." By the temple side was a spring, from which a tiny stream trickled down the side of the mountain. This was one of the sources of the Han, one of the great rivers of China. We had reached the water-shed. On one side of the temple all the streams flowed northward toward the Yellow River. From the other side their direction was south to the

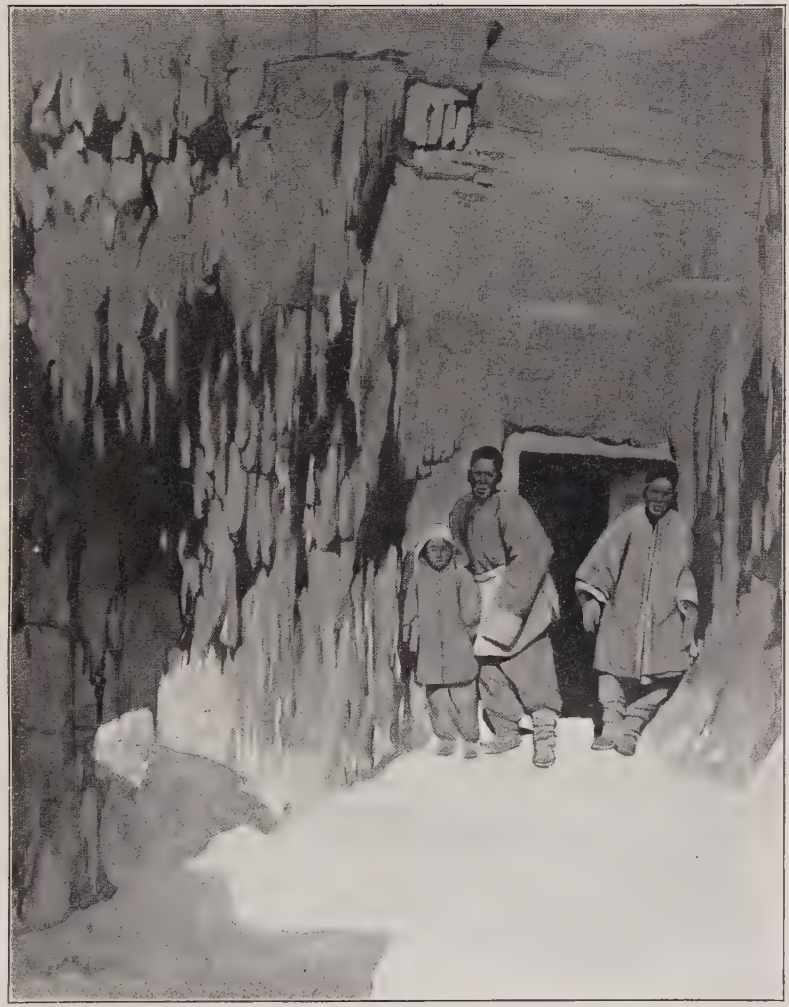
A GORGE OF THE HAN.

Yang tse. From where our horses stood by the temple arch, we could watch the windings of the water from the spring. Near the base of the mountain, the stream was joined by two other brooks, and began its course as a full-fledged river through a gorge. All the rest of the way through the mountains, the trail followed the windings of the river. Sometimes we rode for miles on a gravelly bottom that the current had covered in high water. Often we crossed it, and occasionally we rode along a narrow shelf on the sides of the gorge hundreds of feet above the stream.

As we got farther into the gorges, the scenery became more beautiful. To the Chinese, a great river is a thing sacred, and is to a certain extent an object of worship. On the wildest and most inaccessible promontories of the Han were little shrines and temples. At times from some precipice we could look down on a tiny waterfall or a rapid where the stream was churned white with foam. The sides of the gorges were bare rock that seemed to have been split by some convulsion of nature. Along their sides the trail had apparently been partially chiselled out of the rock and then had been widened by a wall of stone. Riding along a gorge ledge, six feet wide, a hundred feet above a river, is not the pleasantest kind of travelling, but as long as one can keep his seat on the back of a sure-footed pony, there is little danger, except in meeting a long mule caravan coming from an opposite direction. The road

is hardly wide enough to permit of two animals passing, and to add to the difficulty, mules always have the effect of making the ponies shy and plunge, and evince a strong desire to jump over the edge of the precipice.

For half an hour our ponies had been creeping cautiously along the ledge one afternoon, when we suddenly heard the harsh "tur tur" of a caravan of mules approaching from the other side of the promontory we were rounding, which had hidden them from us. Our shijang reined short and looking back gave a quick command. Every man in the line sidled his pony close against the side of the rock so as to keep the inside of the road. A minute later the nose and ears of the bell mule came around the point of the promontory. Every pony rose on two legs wild with fright. But the shijang only urged his pony forward by plying his whip and we followed. Had we halted at that moment, some horse and rider might have gone into the Han, a hundred feet below, but by persistently moving ahead we were shut in by a barrier of mules. Our ponies had not room enough to turn around, so that their only recourse was to plunge forward close to the wall that rose above us. The caravan was a long one, and several especially disagreeable mules made lunges at us with their hind legs. The soldiers were prepared for this, and whenever they saw a mule get too close, crack would go a whip and a saddened mule would hurry



A BURROWED FARM-HOUSE.

back to join the caravan. It seemed to me a very ticklish experience that I was glad to have ended safely on the rocky shelf, and not in the rushing torrent below.

Through the medium of Mr. Duncan's interpreting, I told the shijang that I greatly admired the nerve and coolness he had displayed in guiding us past the mules. He smiled kindly at my barbarian fears. "In riding," he said, "there is never any danger if you can only make your pony do what you want him to." The shijang was a fair specimen of the kind of soldiers who rode with me through China. The pay of men of their kind is about three dollars a month; their food is rice and tea. Their grotesqueness is a source of endless amusement to every foreign second lieutenant stationed in Tien-tsin and Shanghai, but I am just unmilitary enough to believe that if these same soldiers, who wear gaudy uniforms and who tie their queues around their heads, received half the training and drill over which Tommy Atkins grumbles daily, they might surprise men who wear V. C's and Black Eagles.

The scarcity of population in the Tsinglings is shown by the fact that the whole district from Sian to the borders of Honan is embraced in the one prefecture of Shang, an old walled town on the banks of the Han. For fifty miles south of Shang one frequently sees openings high up on the mountain-side just large enough to permit of one person

entering at a time. These are the entrances to huge caves that are places of refuge for the scattered farmers of the community. In time of war or rebellion, when an alarm of an approaching enemy is sounded, the inhabitants of the entire country-side hurry to the caves and hide in them until the danger is passed. The cave entrances, I passed, were always in the steepest parts of the mountain and were not approached by road or pathway. How the refugees succeeded in entering them I was never able to discover. In the face of a bluff overlooking the Han, I counted as many as fifteen of these odd-looking holes, which one of the soldiers told me had been made during the Mohammedan rebellion.

A fondness for digging caves is a peculiarity of the people of Shensi. On the larger farms the granary and storehouse is usually a cave in the side of the mountain. Of the thousands of famine-victims who starved to death in the caves of Sian suburbs, I have already spoken. On the plain near San Yuan, I saw several Shensi homes that were simply burrows dug under the loess soil like rabbit warrens. They were in some cases divided into rooms and were lighted by a hole through the surface of the ground. But the refuge caves of the Tsinglings were the strangest form of the cave-building habit that I saw manifested anywhere in China. In our hurried ride past them I had no opportunity of exploring them. It is possible that

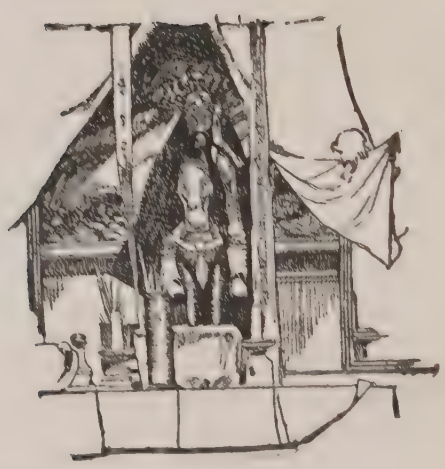
REFUGE CAVES IN THE TSINGLINGS.

a study of the caves of Southern Shensi might explain some of the unanswered questions of the cliff-dweller remains of our own country.

Late on the afternoon of the fifth day after leaving Sian, we clattered over the stone pavement of the one long street of Lung Ku Chai. Our ponies were lathered and drooping. Our last bar of chocolate and our last drop of condensed milk had been consumed at the day's noon meal. Our voices were husky and our clothes were travel-stained. As faint and aching I finally drew up at the gate of the inn, the first person I saw was Wang, who had arrived only an hour before us. He, too, showed the effects of a journey through the Tsinglings. His velvet blouse was covered with dust and his queue was sadly dishevelled. He had bruised his knee in climbing a mountain and limped painfully, but from the piles of luggage still strapped to the pack saddles in the court-yard, he had extracted my shaving kit.

As a soldier half lifted me from the saddle, Wang handed me my razors. "For five days," he said, "the beard of my master is growing. I think maybe he like to cut it off." I thanked him for his thoughtfulness, but I added, "You are in a great deal worse shape than I am. You needn't trouble about me. Have your queue braided and then lie down on your pooka and take a nap." He smiled with the far-away, rather sad smile of his race. "It would not be right for me to sleep,

sir," he said, "before I see that you are resting. The queue is Chinese; it can wait patiently, but the beard is European; it cannot wait; it must go quickly."



CHAPTER XIX

ON THE HAN

NO one but a Chinaman would ever think of calling the upper Han navigable. For more than a hundred miles below Lung Ku Chai the water is seldom more than two feet deep and in many places the sandy bottom can be seen at a depth of five inches.

As a means of facilitating the transportation of the vast amount of freight that comes into Shensi by way of the Han, any ordinary race would deepen the river by dredging, but that is not the Chinese way. The natural depth of the river must not be changed. Boats must be adapted to meet conditions that have always existed. Han River boats are entirely different from the junks so common both on the coast and the larger rivers of China. Through the Han gorges the boats are canoes, remarkably like those of North American Indians. The boats are pointed at both ends and the prow and stern are both continued above the gunwale in long, sweeping curves. Although they are without keels the sides of Han River canoes have a sheer slope toward the centre of the bottom, which is seldom more than four inches wide. This shape

helps to steady the canoes and prevents their upsetting when rounding a sharp turn in the river or in passing through a rapid. Ever since the Chinese have had boats they have divided them into water-tight compartments on the same principle which has been introduced into the construction of ocean liners during the last quarter of a century.

In many junks the compartment bulkheads are only high enough to protect the keel, but in Han River canoes they extend to the gunwales. They are very awkward to climb over when one has to pass from one end of the boat to the other, but they make it impossible for the canoe to sink in case of an accident. If a boat on the Han were cut in two both sections would still remain afloat. Although the canoes are built for carrying freight, they are made habitable for passengers by covering them with a roof of matting stretched on a bamboo frame. Between the bulkhead compartments shelves are nailed that serve as benches by day and as beds at night. At the bow and stern is a small triangular deck, fitted with a clumsy row-lock. Through this is inserted a long handle with a flat board on the end that performs the double duty of oar and rudder. At this oar the boatmen take turns when the water is deep enough to permit of its use, but most of the time the propelling power is only the long poles over which the crew toil and perspire.

A HOME ON THE UPPER HAN.

The crew of a canoe usually consists of five men, under a captain who is called a lowban. In some cases the lowban is also the owner of the boat, but most of the Han canoes are owned by a Chinese transportation company, whose headquarters are in Honan. Contracts for freight and passengers are made with the lowban. For the voyage through the gorges we chartered three canoes.

Two of them we fitted up as living quarters, and the third served as a kitchen, dining-saloon, and sleeping apartments for servants and the soldiers who accompanied us. Our meals were cooked in a little mud oven that we purchased in Lung Ku Chai, together with some fagots for fuel and a supply of fresh eggs, rice, and tea, that constituted our commissariat. About daybreak on the morning following our arrival in Lung Ku Chai, the lowbans shouted to their crews. The poles were shoved into the mud of the bottom and our three canoes, in procession, were headed down the Han.

The boatmen of the gorges are strange folk, who neither look nor act like other Chinese, but both in appearance and manner are as much like North American Indians as their boats are like canoes.

Their skins are the colour of copper, and their features are straight, with high cheek-bones and eyes less almond-shaped than those of the Mongol type. They are tall, straight men, very agile and

sinewy. They are taciturn and rather gruff. Their conversation is usually carried on in monosyllables. They smile sometimes, and occasionally startle one by the suddenness and loudness of their laughter, but they say little. To me they always seemed devoid of the ordinary Chinese fondness for argument and serious conversation. The men of the upper Han were the only Chinese I have ever met with who disliked their queues. I have never known a boatman to remove the turban that he wore over his queue tightly coiled around his head. Among the boatmen it is regarded as a disgrace for a man to allow his queue to be seen. This feeling once prevailed all over China. The queue was originally a mark of subjection enforced upon the Black Haired People, four hundred years ago, by the Manchus, but the braided hair soon became fashionable and is to-day generally regarded by Manchus and Chinese alike as a man's chief beauty.

Han boatmen never get nearer to the thickly populated part of the Empire than the borders of the province of Hupeh, where all freight bound up or down the river is transferred from their canoes to junks. Their wives and children, whom they seldom see, live in isolated villages that are hidden away among the mountains.

The boatman's days and nights are spent on the old river, whose primitive wildness has never been disturbed during the thousands of years it has been traversed by the Sons of Han. To a man of

BOATMEN OF THE GORGES.

the gorges, the river is not only a means of livelihood, it is his life and his religion.

Although in the wildest part of the Han cliffs one finds shrines and temples, they are of little interest to the men who pole slowly past them. The boatmen have a religion that is all their own and that is neither Buddhist nor Confucian. A kind of primitive Pantheism prevails in the gorges. The trees and rocks and the river itself are peopled by spirits, some of whom are good and some evil. The spirits are omnipresent and never sleep; they are all under the control of a mysterious being called the River Dragon. Occasionally he renders assistance to good boatmen, but most of the time, so far as I was able to discover, he is an intensely disagreeable person. He sends adverse winds and he puts hidden rocks in the shallows. Like the traditional Manitou of the Indians, the River Dragon sometimes assumes the form of a bird or a tree. The home of the River Dragon is somewhere under the river, where there are green fields and no mountains. Whenever a contrary wind is blowing up the gorges, all the crew stop work. The lowban sits cross-legged on the triangular deck forward and makes a crooning noise in imitation of the wind. This constitutes a sort of prayer to the River Dragon for a favourable breeze. For several days after our embarkation at La Ho Kien, I was at a loss to understand why the boatmen would never tell how many li we had gone during the day

and would always grow sullen and morose when asked questions about the journey.

As it was sometimes important for us to have some idea of the progress we were making, I one day took the lowban severely to task for his strange dislike of discussing distances. "I don't want any more nonsense about it," I said. "When you are asked how far we have gone, you must reply."

"Do you not understand," the lowban asked, in a pleading tone, "that the evil spirits are listening to every word we say? If they understood that we were in a hurry they would put obstacles in our way from sheer malice. The only way is not to let them know what we are doing."

At night the canoes are anchored by sticking the poles through holes in the curved bows into the mud of the river bottom. After the crew have eaten their evening meal they make a little bonfire of incense-sticks in the rice-kettle. This is an offering to propitiate the River Dragon and to secure his favour for the next day's voyage. Around the incense-fire the boatmen seem to throw aside some of their habitual reserve. They tell stories about the old spirits, and sometimes, led by the lowban, they break into a song. It is the same kind of singing that one hears all over China, a sort of chant in a guttural monotone that usually is discordant and jarring. The only time and place where I found it at all bearable, was at night in the gorges, where the harshness of the singing was softened by its

echoes on the cliffs and mountains that surrounded us. The greater part of the time the boatmen wear no shoes, and their trousers are invariably rolled up to their knees. Whenever a grating noise gives warning that a canoe is fast on the bottom, the crew jump overboard and begin a series of manœuvres to get it off. This is sometimes accomplished by pulling and hauling at the bow and stern, but when the shallow extends for some distance the lowban produces a large wooden hoe from under the deck, and with it the boatmen dredge out a canal into deeper water.

Shallows and adverse winds and rocks make travelling on the Han exceedingly slow. Twelve miles is a good day's progress, and I doubt if any other boatmen on earth would have the patience to do so much strenuous shoulder shoving as is required for even this short distance. Shallow as is the water of the river, one encounters rapids at intervals of every twenty or thirty miles. Strewn along the banks are numerous wrecks of canoes that have gone to pieces on the jagged rocks that rise in the midst of the current. On approaching a rapid, the crews of our three boats would go ashore and fasten long ropes to the sterns of the canoes. Then, holding back with their united strength, they would lower each boat down the descent, in much the same way that a barrel might be let down into a cellar.

The gorges in some places are so narrow that there is hardly room for two canoes to pass each

other. Whenever one of them runs aground on a shallow, it partially blockades the river. All heavily laden canoes bound up or down the river must wait until the one aground has been floated again. Before this can be accomplished, the cargo may have to be lightened, or a hole patched that has been made in the bottom by a rock.

We frequently passed thirty or forty belated boats waiting for the derelict to be dislodged. Our canoes were always able to squeeze through the press, partly because they were lighter and drew less water than the rest, and also because Prince Ching's card gave us special privileges on the Han as elsewhere in China. Whenever we came to a blockade our three soldiers compelled the boatmen of the belated fleet to assist in pushing us through. The shoulders of twenty stalwart men of the gorges shoving at the stern of a boat whose only cargo is four men and their pookas, furnished sufficient motive power to carry us some distance over dry ground.

The Chinese characteristic of knowing how to wait is nowhere better illustrated than in these blockades on the Han. In passing a blockade by a shallow, we were, one day, hailed in English by a passenger of one of the boats, who was a Chinese telegraph operator on his way to a town in Hupeh. He said that his canoe had been for three days in the position where we saw it, but he added that life on the Han was quite as pleasant as anywhere

else, and he had no objection to waiting for three days more. Our crews looked upon the blockades as places for resting, and several times complained at our hurry to pass through them.

Like the canoes and the boatmen, the Han gorges are themselves different from anything else I have seen in China. Without inhabitants, without farms or roads or carts, the land through which the Han winds is a lonely wilderness that separates old China from the new; a lovely interim between the crowded, grey plains of the North and of the South. Most of China is a level field for the study of isolated man and his work, his learning, his originality, and his eternity; but for three hundred miles below Lung Ku Chai it is nature, beautiful and primitive, that unfolds in an unending panorama as the canoe drops down the river. It is really a relief to find anything in the country of the isolated man that is older than he. He seems never to have begun or to have changed. He has always been as he is to-day. But long before he came, the cliffs and the mountains were as wild and simple as now.

This restfulness adds to the charm of the gorges through which the Han wanders lazily on its way to the Yang tse. Sometimes the shallow current lingers around the base of a mountain towering far above. Sometimes the water is compressed into a torrent that foams and bubbles through a fissures pecially prepared to receive it. In such places the walls of the gorge rise from the water's edge as

sheer and unyielding as the walls of a house, often so high that they partially shut out the sunlight, and the cabin under the matting is darkened at mid-day. Again one floats for miles past sandy beaches, from which the Han has receded and which form a white margin at the base of the picture.

When there are no rocks along the gorges, the hills and lower mountains are covered with underbrush whose tints vary with the sky and the day. At noon the colour of the gorges is green. In the early morning they are purple, and when a sunset ray flashes across them, hills and cliffs and river take on a golden brown. Often the river seems to end at a point in mid-stream where two opposite mountains meet, but on nearer approach they are seen to divide and make way for the current that turns sharply around one of them. The boatmen jump overboard and silently throw their shoulders against the stern. The lowban shouts an order and the canoe swishes on again.

There are birds, too, in the gorges, but, like their environment, they are silent. No winged song is heard in the solitudes. Pheasants occasionally come out from underneath the bushes to stare at the canoes as they pass; and grey birds that look like large pigeons with long, sharp bills, sometimes fly into the canoes and gaze at the human beings under the matting. These birds are always in pairs, and are for this reason called "married birds." They are almost without fear of man, and

will often fly almost near enough to allow you to touch them. The boatmen think that the birds may be spirits in disguise and treat them with great respect. They frequently throw to them grains of rice that they can ill afford to spare from their own scanty supply.

Oh, the nights on the Han when the anchor poles were all stuck close to a white beach or in the mud of some little cove, and the stars shone down from a clear December sky! It was at such times that Wang and I would try to make the lowban talk over his incense-fire and tell us stories about the River Dragon and the wind spirits and all the rest of the delightful old lies that were yet unwithered by a knowledge of facts. I think that down in the depths of his heart, Wang half believed the lowban's yarns. He often took occasion during our talks around the incense-fire to ask me "half wild-child" questions that he kept carefully to himself at other times. He always asked them timidly as though he expected that I would laugh at them.

"The lowban is foolish man," Wang once said to me; "he does not understand right. The dragon is not of the Han River only. He is the big dragon that is everywhere. Some day he will eat every good thing in the world so that it will dry up and go to pieces. The European and the missionary say that such a thing is fool-talk. I suppose you think so, too." I replied that to a very large extent I agreed with him, and that I certainly

did believe in a universal dragon who was always fighting against truth and light and who would undoubtedly like to wither the world, but I said that I did not consider the victory of the dragon a foregone conclusion. It seemed to me that the dragon was being constantly driven into the background, and that the time might come when he would disappear altogether.

The nearest approach to a town—on the upper Han—is the cluster of houses called Kingtse Kwan that mark the boundary line between Shensi and Honan. When the river is at especially low water in mid-summer, Kingtse Kwan is the head of navigation, and for that reason is a place of some importance. Before the Boxer uprising it was the centre of considerable mission activity, but the missionaries were compelled to fly for their lives, and their station was partially destroyed by a mob. At Kingtse Kwan the river bends to the southward, and for more than fifty miles its course is through the western end of Honan.

On one of these days on the Han I was overtaken by a mild attack of the fever that sooner or later is almost certain to find every foreigner who ventures far into China. As is usually the case, the fever was as sudden as it was overpowering. Half an hour after the appearance of the first symptoms I was lying on my bunk under the matting with my brain sadly tangled and my temperature rapidly rising. "Quinine, phenacetine, and perspiration" was

Mr. Duncan's treatment, and for fighting a Chinese fever under difficulties I would rather trust the "Missionary of Sian" than the most skilful physician in the world. The medicine was quickly administered, from phials which the missionary always carried in a raw-hide case; but the carrying out of the rest of the programme required some nursing, and for this I was dependent upon Wang.

Nearly two months before, he had been carried into a Shansi kung kwan suffering from a kind of nervous exhaustion due to fatigue. I had sat up with him during the night and I had taken care of him, but all that I had been able to do for him amounted to nothing, and I had almost forgotten all about it; but on the afternoon of my fever, Wang said to me, "When I was sick you were to me a father. You are my master, but besides you belong my friend. You are European and I am Chinese, but all the same we are one. When you are sick it is for me to show that I can stick to you."

Besides all my own blankets and sheepskins, he piled over me his own pooka, although it was his only covering at night from the cold December wind, against which the flimsy matting-roof of our cabin afforded little protection. He stole several sheepskins from the lowban, and added them to the pile. While my fever lasted, Wang never left me for a minute. He would not go into the cook-boat for his meals, but lived on bowls of rice that he got from the lowban. At night he lay down on the

narrow keel-board alongside of my bunk, but when he slept I do not know. Whenever I awoke from a kind of delirious sleep, there were Wang's black eyes shining at me out of the darkness. If I kicked off a pooka, he would jump up instantly and replace it on the pile again. He never said anything, but occasionally when he thought I was sleeping he would gently take hold of my hand to see if my temperature had fallen.

After about thirty-six hours under the blankets, I awoke one morning with the fever broken. "Hello, Wang," I said. "You can take away some of these things now. I am coming around." For reply, he sprang up from the floor and shouted to Mr. Duncan, who was in the bow with the lowban. "It is good thing. He is not crazy now." Many times since, when I have read of the heathen darkness and original sin that in the opinion of some persons are the two chief elements in Chinese character, I have thought of those two faithful black eyes that were never closed during those feverish days and nights in the gorges of the Han. Wang, with his immobile yellow face and his long queue, was "only a Chinaman," and he had only a Chinese heart and a Chinese soul. But without him I never could have gone through China. He perhaps saved my life. I am proud to say that he was my "very good friend."

CHAPTER XX

THROUGH HUPEH IN A JUNK

IF the wind spirits of the Han are not especially unpropitious the voyager will on about the tenth day after leaving Lung Ku Chai drift with the current around a promontory out upon an abrupt widening of the river that at first sight seems almost like a small lake. On one side, the bank rises in a high bluff that is surmounted by a stone wall and gateway, the unmistakable signs of a city. A stone pier juts out into the river, and from it a stairway winds up to the gateway. This is La Ho Kieu, one of the river-towns of Hupeh. It is from this point that the Han becomes essentially commercial. In the river-bed are twenty or thirty junks of every variety known to China. Some are for passengers and some are for freight. Some are moored to the wharf and some are anchored in mid-stream. On the junks and about the wharves are crowds of men transferring merchandise from one boat to another and carrying it in long processions that wind in single file up the stairway. The life and activity of the scene are accentuated by contrast with the silent gorges from which the canoe has just emerged. The barrier mountains tower dim behind. The traveller

is on a mighty commercial river of commercial China.

As in most of the towns in Western Hupeh, the weaving of silk is the chief industry of La Ho Kieu. In the fields about the town are thousands of mulberry trees, from which the cocoons are gathered, and are brought in baskets to the factories in the town. The exterior of a Chinese silk factory gives little indication of the nature or extent of the business carried on within. Chinese merchants of all kinds seem always quite as anxious to conceal the magnitude or the success of their enterprises as Americans are to advertise them. A little sign over a doorway informs the passer-by that this is the entrance to a "silk shop." In the small front room is a divan with the persistent tea-cups and the right and left hand seats. No silk or any other kind of merchandise is visible anywhere, and there is nothing in the conduct of either the proprietor or his clerks that indicates a desire to sell anything. A customer sits on the divan while a servant brings him a cup of tea. If he expresses a desire to purchase, the proprietor begins taking from a chest in the corner, roll after roll of silk, which he spreads on a little table in the centre of the room. His manner, meanwhile, is supremely indifferent. He silently displays his wares without deigning an explanation, much less urging a purchase. He takes pains to unroll, at first, silk of a cheap and inferior quality, reserving an exhibit of the finer grades until

his customer expresses a desire to see them. Across a court-yard, in the rear of the shop, is the factory. It consists of three or four large rooms, where can be seen the entire process of silk manufacture from the cocoon to the cloth.

Although the silk industry of China dates from the time of Hwang Ti, 2800 B.C., and the processes employed have never differed materially from what they are to-day, the system of manufacture is remarkably like that found in large silk-mills on our side of the world. The looms are quite as intricate as those used in America, the only essential difference being that the motive power in Hupeh is a foot-treadle instead of steam. Two men are employed at every loom, the weaver sits in front at the treadle and works the shuttle while another man sets the pattern above on a network of catgut strings. As silk weaving is a form of skilled labour requiring three or four years to master, a weaver receives the extraordinarily high wages of fifty cents a day, which is more than twice as much as can be earned by a labourer in any other trade in Hupeh. The kind of silk that I saw produced on the looms of La Ho Kieu is very different from the flimsy material sold in New York as China silk.

The silk cloth of Hupeh is very heavy and is woven in brocaded patterns of various shades and designs. An unfailing market for the product of the mills is afforded by the government rule requiring all of the thousands of mandarins to wear only

silk robes of a prescribed texture and fineness. In the mill at La Ho Kieu hundreds of yards of this brown "mandarin cloth" were slowly unwinding from the looms.

At La Ho Kieu we said good-bye to our canoes and the men of the gorges. The boatmen piled our luggage carefully on the pier. Wang handed to the lowbans the number of taels that we owed them. They tested the genuineness of each lump by knocking it on the flagstones; they slipped the money into pouches that hung from their belts, then dropping on their knees they solemnly bumped their foreheads on the wharf, in token of gratitude. As their canoes reached the middle of the stream, the boatmen assembled on the afterdecks, and, looking back at us, waved their hands in a last farewell. I watched them sculling up-stream against the current. As they disappeared around the dark promontory I felt that the last link was breaking that had bound me to old Shensi, the country of the ancient plain and the primitive mountains. We had left the by-path where dwelt the River Dragon and the spirits and were now on a highway, crowded with men and things, and crowds on highways, even in China, always are pressed forward toward realities. The land of lingering and dreams was passed.

Compared with the canoes, the large junk on which we embarked at La Ho Kieu was a modern and convenient craft. It was divided into five

FISHERS OF LA HO KIEU.

cabins and had a tiny little dining-room that rejoiced in the luxury of a table and three wooden stools.

In an extension built over the huge, ungainly stern was a kind of house where lived the captain and his wife. To them the junk was both a home and a livelihood. The captain was an affable, rather modern Chinaman, who had frequently visited Hankow. He explained that although we were the first passengers not Chinese whom his junk had carried, he had often seen foreigners before and "had watched their ways." The junk was fitted with a mast and a clumsy square sail that was hoisted only with great difficulty and that creaked and flapped painfully. My experience of Han River boats has led me to believe that they carry sails more from force of habit than as a motive power.

There is scarcely a mile of the river that does not contain at least two sharp angles around which the junk must alter its direction. The same wind that for a few minutes makes the heavy sail fill, will cause it to flap or draw backward when the junk changes its course, but it is such a difficult task to lower the sail that although it is often an impediment, it is usually allowed to remain set all day after it has been hoisted in the morning. Far more useful than the sail is the mast. For the greater part of the way the peak is about on a level with the top of the clay bluff that forms the

bank. From the mast-peak a tow-rope is carried ashore. The captain and crew tie it around their waists and then walk along the top of the cliff or bluff slowly pulling the junk after them.

The number of junks on the Han is so great that were the tow-ropes to be fastened to the bows after the manner of American canal-boats, all craft on the river would be constantly involved in a network of ropes hanging close above the surface of the water. But by elevating the tow-lines to the peak of the mast, junks are enabled to pass under them.

At the border line between Honan and Hupeh the gorges disappear. From that point to its junction with the Yang tse at Hankow the Han flows between high clay banks. The current is brown and murky, very different from the clear, shimmering stream fed by springs in the Shensi mountains. The towns which one finds on the river-bluffs are all very much alike. They have stone gateways, from which a flight of stone steps descends to a pier extending into the river. Occasionally on a beach in a cleft in the wall-like bluff is a little mud village whose inhabitants make strenuous efforts to sell eggs and vegetables to passing junks. In the background of the villages are often groves of bamboo-trees which from a distance look not unlike American willows. Hupeh, too, is the country of the water-buffalo. Every few miles on the Han one sees the long, drooping

horns of a buffalo just visible above the surface of the water.

In Hupeh the buffalo divides with the cow the labour of ploughing and harrowing the fields, but the buffalo's capacity for work is not so great as that of the patient, unmilked Chinese cow. A buffalo must stand with all but his head immersed for several hours every day to maintain his normal equanimity. Although he is for the greater part of the time a most docile beast of burden, if his daily plunge in the river is denied him he becomes wild and goes on a rampage, trying to kick and gore everyone with whom he comes in contact. The Hupeh way of characterising a man in a rage is to say, " He is as mad as a water-buffalo."

It would be interesting to know the amount of the annual tonnage of the Han River. If it could be presented in figures the West might form some adequate idea of the internal commerce of China. The Han is one of seven or eight rivers, which, on every day in the year, are crowded with thousands of junks loaded to the gunwales with every form of merchandise known to the Black Haired People.

The junks are of light draught, and, according to Western ideas of shipbuilding, are ungainly and top-heavy. Yet one of these flimsy boats is able to carry an amount of freight that would tax the capacity of a large American coasting schooner. There seems to be almost no limit to the amount of cargo which a fleet of junks can transport

from one point on the river to another. Chinese ingenuity is in nothing more manifest than in the methods of stowing freight. The cabins and upper works are not nailed, but are merely fastened together by skilful dovetailing. When the cargo is greater than the hull will hold, the cabins are removed and the surplus of freight is piled high above the gunwales. Cargoes of long timbers are tied across two or three junks abreast, forming of them a gigantic catamaran, on which the crew sleep and eat and cook their meals as comfortably as on the floor of a house. We passed some twenty or thirty junks heavily laden with bales of American and British cotton cloth. Room was always provided for an extra bale by unrolling it and from it improvising a temporary topsail. The cloth sail was never cut, but on reaching its destination it was rolled up again and delivered to the consignee in the original bale that the boatman had received from the shipper.

A voyage on a great waterway of China is enough to convince anyone that there is considerable foundation for the Chinese argument against a change to improved methods of transportation. The crude and unwieldy junks on the Han River must afford a means of livelihood to hundreds of thousands of families. Were the river to be dredged so as to be navigable for steamers, or were it to be paralleled by a railroad, all of the men who directly or indirectly make a living from the junks

A RIVER FREIGHT BOAT.

would be thrown out of work. In any other country in the world, there might be a chance of their finding employment in some other trade or business, but this is impossible in China, for the reason that the division of labour is fixed and permanent. There is no shifting of the centres of population or the opening of new avenues of industry.

From birth to death every Chinese moves along a path which his fathers trod before him. So long as he is allowed to remain in that particular path he will never be idle or in want, but if he be forced out of it there is no alternative for him but to starve or to become a vagabond or a Boxer. The prospect of thousands of boatmen permanently unemployed is enough to make a government far less conservative than that of China hesitate before inaugurating river improvements that would precipitate such a calamity. It is significant that the Boxer fury first manifested itself in the neighborhood of Tientsin and Pekin, where a short railroad to the coast had to a large extent destroyed the business of the junks that for ages had carried freight up and down the Pei Ho River. Almost without exception, the former boatmen were Boxers.

From La Ho Kieu to Hankow the Han is patrolled by a succession of war junks, whose business it is to prevent smuggling and to suppress the river-pirates who now and then steal out at night and rob fleets of freight-boats anchored near the shore. Accustomed as I was by this time to the

appearance of slovenliness and neglect that characterised everything belonging to the government, the neatness and trim beauty of the war junks was a pleasant surprise. They are by far the swiftest and triggest craft on the river. Although built after the model of an ordinary junk, their lines are exceptionally graceful. The gunwale dips amidships, the prow is lower, and the stern overhang is less ungainly than in other boats.

A war junk is manned by a crew of about twenty soldiers, who work the long oars. Soldiers of the junks pride themselves on the beauty of their uniforms. Their tunics are always of the gayest colours, pink or green or purple, embroidered in white or yellow braid. In a small cabin over the stern are the quarters of the captain, who has the rank of major in the Chinese army. But the strangest thing about a war junk is its immaculate cleanliness, so completely at variance with the country of its environment. Every morning and evening the deck is washed and scrubbed, and the crew spend most of their leisure hours in painting their craft with a kind of shellac that prevents its exterior from ever looking dirty or stained. The most beautiful sight on the Han River is a war junk cutting through the muddy water with twenty soldiers at the oars, their backs rising and falling in unison. Because I possessed a little piece of red paper inscribed with Prince Ching's name, we were accompanied down the river by a succession of war junks.

A HAN WAR JUNK.

As each of them left us at the end of its line of patrol a diminutive brass cannon on the bow would be fired three times as a salute; this would be answered by the same number of shots from the relieving junk that was to accompany us for the next stage of the journey.

At night the crew of the war junk anchored alongside of us, manifested interest in our safety in accordance with Chinese methods by beating a drum once in every hour during the night. Although this process made sleep impossible, it seemed to me base ingratitude to tell the captains that I disliked the noise that their men were kind enough to make for my protection. I explained to them that I fully appreciated the honour conferred upon me by the din of the junk's drum, but that I felt so secure with their brave men near me that I believed I could dispense with it in order that the crew of the war junk might sleep instead of keeping awake for the purpose of making a noise. This expedient for stopping the nightly drum-beating worked admirably. The war-junk captains always thanked me for my consideration of their men and allowed no sound to break the stillness of the night more strenuous than the ripple of the current around the prow.

On the opposite banks of a bend in the river, fifty miles south of La Ho Kieu, are the Shen cities of Fan Ching and Siang Yang. They are now only sleepy, old river-towns with crumbling walls and dilapidated wharves, but there was a time, seven

hundred years ago, when they successfully defied the besieging armies of Kublai Khan. All the country to the northward had been conquered by the Mongols, but for two years the Chinese garrisons of Fan Ching and Siang Yang held the way to the capital in Kai Feng. Again and again Kublai's soldiers attempted to scale the walls and were as often driven back. In despair at ever taking the two stubborn cities, Kublai sent to his nephew in Persia for cannon of an improved pattern.

By means of the huge missiles that these new war engines hurled at the walls of Fan Ching a breach was made that permitted the Mongols to enter. Unable to continue the fight alone, Siang Yang surrendered. The heroism of the garrisons had so won the admiration of the Mongols that Kublai spared their lives and took them all into his own service. With the fall of Fan Ching and Siang Yang the last hope of saving China from the Tartars failed. Within a year afterward, Kublai Khan was proclaimed in Pekin Emperor of China and Mongolia.

Fan Ching to-day has a large market and contains a few silk factories, but Siang Yang lives largely upon its memories. Because of its traditions it is a favourite place of residence for aged mandarins, who have retired from active life with snug fortunes accumulated by years of "squeezing." The space within its walls is divided into gardens surrounding the villas of its residents. Throughout

China Siang Yang is renowned for the glory of its past and the exclusiveness of its present.

Early one morning, opposite to the village of Yo Kia, we discovered a tugboat—by courtesy called a steamer. It was owned by a Chinese company in Hankow who make a business of carrying passengers and the mails up the river. We hailed the steamer and climbed aboard, piling all our blankets and pookas in a huge heap in the centre of the deck in the midst of the Chinese passengers. We asked the young captain at what hour he expected to reach Hankow. "About midnight," he replied. As the distance was only about seventy miles, and the dirty tug made about nine knots an hour, we were for a time at a loss to understand why sixteen hours should be necessary for the journey, but the reason became apparent in the course of the afternoon when we anchored in front of a town where a dragon flag on the top of the bluff proclaimed the existence of a li-king station.

Li-king is the abominable internal revenue toll which all Chinese boats must pay at intervals in passing up and down rivers of the Empire. The li-king tax is supposed to go to the general government, but, as a matter of fact, most of it is appropriated by the mandarins in whose districts the stations happen to be. In front of the li-king station the fires of our steamer were allowed to go down and preparations were made for a long wait. The amount of li-king which our captain had to pay was

only 2,000 cash (about $1.40), but he explained that the official in charge of the station was a "mean" man who did not like the idea of steamboats supplanting junks in the carrying trade. "Just to make trouble for us," the captain said, "the li-king man usually detains me for two or three hours before he will receive my money and let me go on again." At Mr. Duncan's suggestion I gave Prince Ching's card to the captain and told him to show it to the "mean" man in offering to pay his li-king.

Within ten minutes after he had left the boat, the captain came running down the path from the station, his face overspread with smiles. He at once gave orders to heave anchor and start again. He told us what had happened at the station. "When I showed Prince Ching's card to the mean man," he explained, "he asked where I got it. I replied that it belonged to a passenger on the steamer. 'If you do not start within fifteen minutes,' said the mean man to me, 'I will have you bambooed. Don't you have sense enough not to delay a man who carries His Highness' card. Get out quick and don't stand around here.'" The captain's gratitude to us for helping him to get the better of the "mean" man knew no bounds. After passing the li-king station he gave us special privileges on the tug. We were allowed the exclusive use of the dirty cabin aft of the engine, all the first-class Chinese passengers being driven on

deck, and a boy, whose face, I am sure, had not been washed for a month, was detailed to bring us cups of tea at intervals of every half-hour.

The li-king station was the last place where Prince Ching's card was of service to me. About nine o'clock in that evening, twenty-one days after leaving Sian, our steamer dropped anchor off the Chinese quarter of Hankow. We loaded our belongings into three san pans and were slowly sculled through a press of junks into the broad, dark Yang tse. An hour later the square bows grated on the stone coping of the embankment that leads from the Bund down to the water's edge. Above us were the electric lights and high, stone buildings of the foreign concession. Wang and I were left alone in our san pan while the rest of the party went ashore to find porters to carry our luggage to the hotel. It was ten o'clock, on a starlight, crisp, December evening. The Bund was silent, save for the occasional rattle of a rickshaw carrying a lingerer from the club to his home. On a bench at the top of the embankment two men were sitting. They had apparently dined late and together. Their conversation, as it floated down to where we lay in our san pan on piles of pookas, was something like this :

"And his luck had such a run," said one of the men. "Three jackpots—took them all in. It's always the way with that chap when he's drunk. Why, he never holds anything better than

nine spots when he's sober, but he was drunk to-night—ha, ha, loaded to the guards. During the last deal his boy had to steady him to keep him from falling off his chair—and game—never moved an eyelash when he called that straight flush. Superb, wasn't it?"

"Good thing, anyway," replied the other man. "He needed a turn. He lost quite a bit when Golden Pheasant ran third at Shanghai last month. Great Scotch that, to-night. I understand it was a special lot the steward ordered some time ago—came in only yesterday on the Jardine. By the way, young Chumpkins wasn't in his corner this evening. He seldom misses a game—wonder where he was."

"Oh, girl I fancy. I heard to-day his engagement will be announced soon."

"Guffenbach's daughter?"

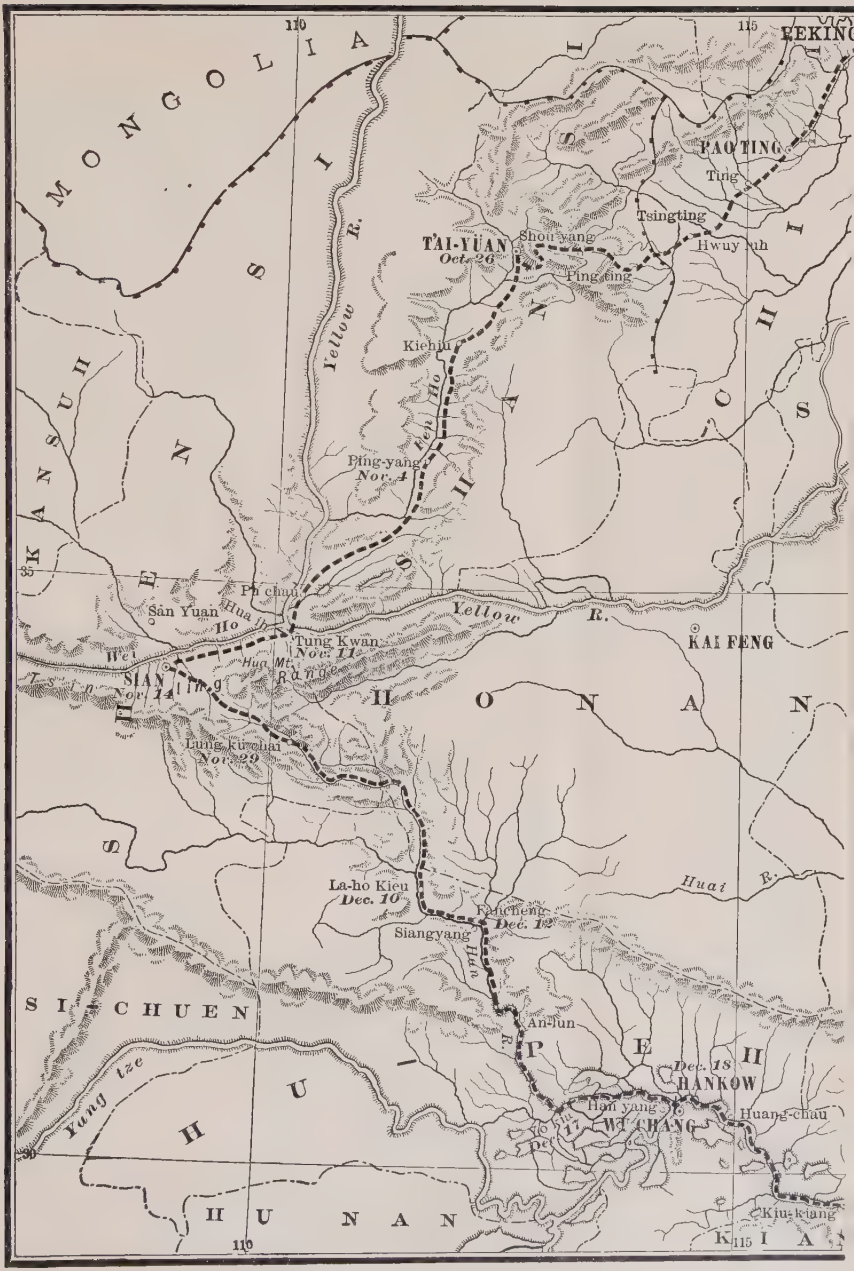
"Yes. Just a rumour."

"Jolly good for Chumpkins. She's an only child. Guffenbach's getting pretty well along in years, but he has one of the clearest heads on the river. Came into twenty thousand taels on his last opium spec', you know."

I had been so long in the "heathen" part of a "heathen" land, and I had become so inured to the ways of "yellow barbarians," that these first familiar snatches of the conversation of Christian civilisation sounded strangely new and jarring. Wang, in the stern of the san pan, was blinking at the electric

lights. "The Europeans live in nice places," he said; "the houses are large, the streets are clean, and the lamps are bright; but for me, my master, it is better the kung kwan and the mandarin and the lowban and the mountain."

THE END



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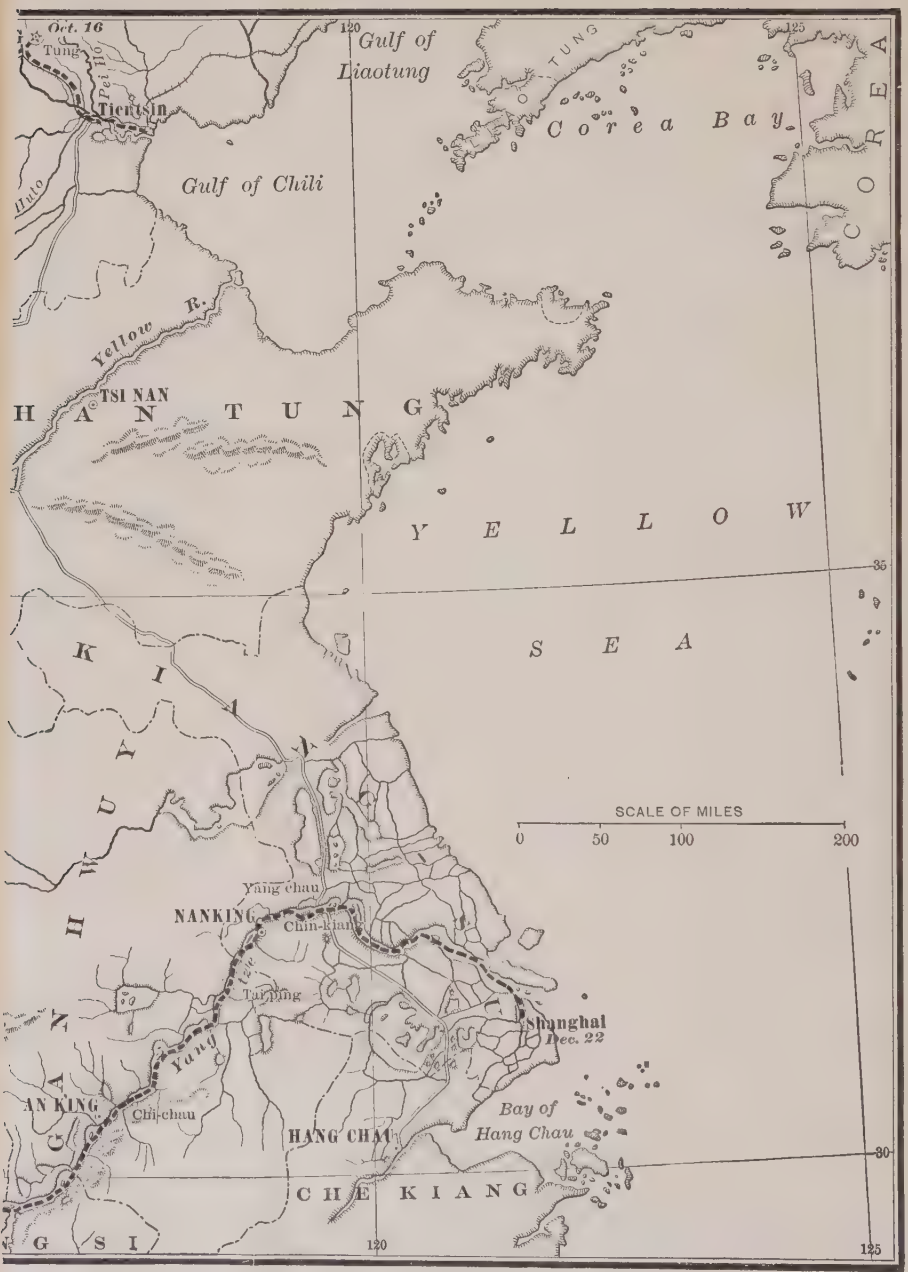

H HIDDEN SHENSI AND OTHER PARTS OF CHINA.

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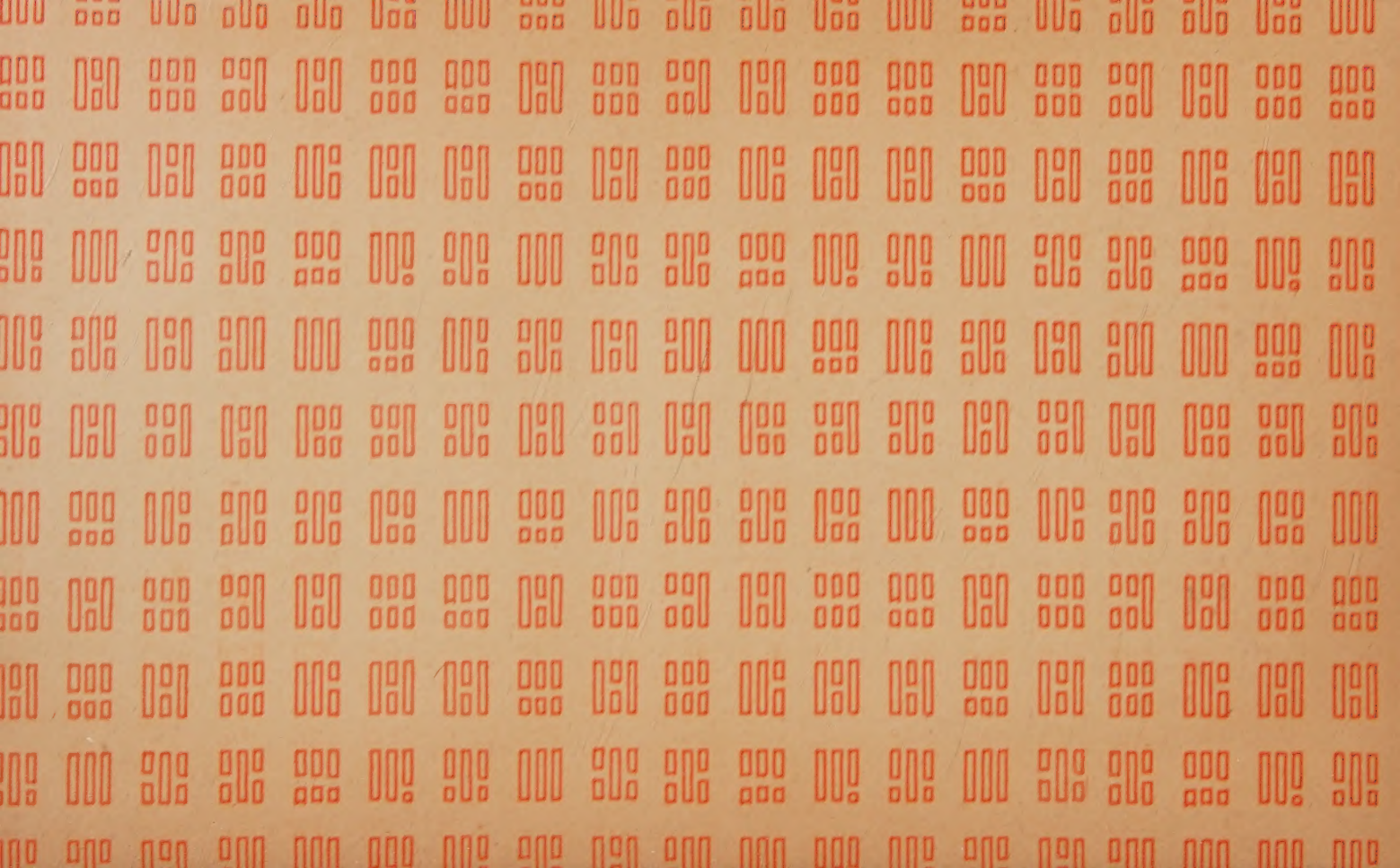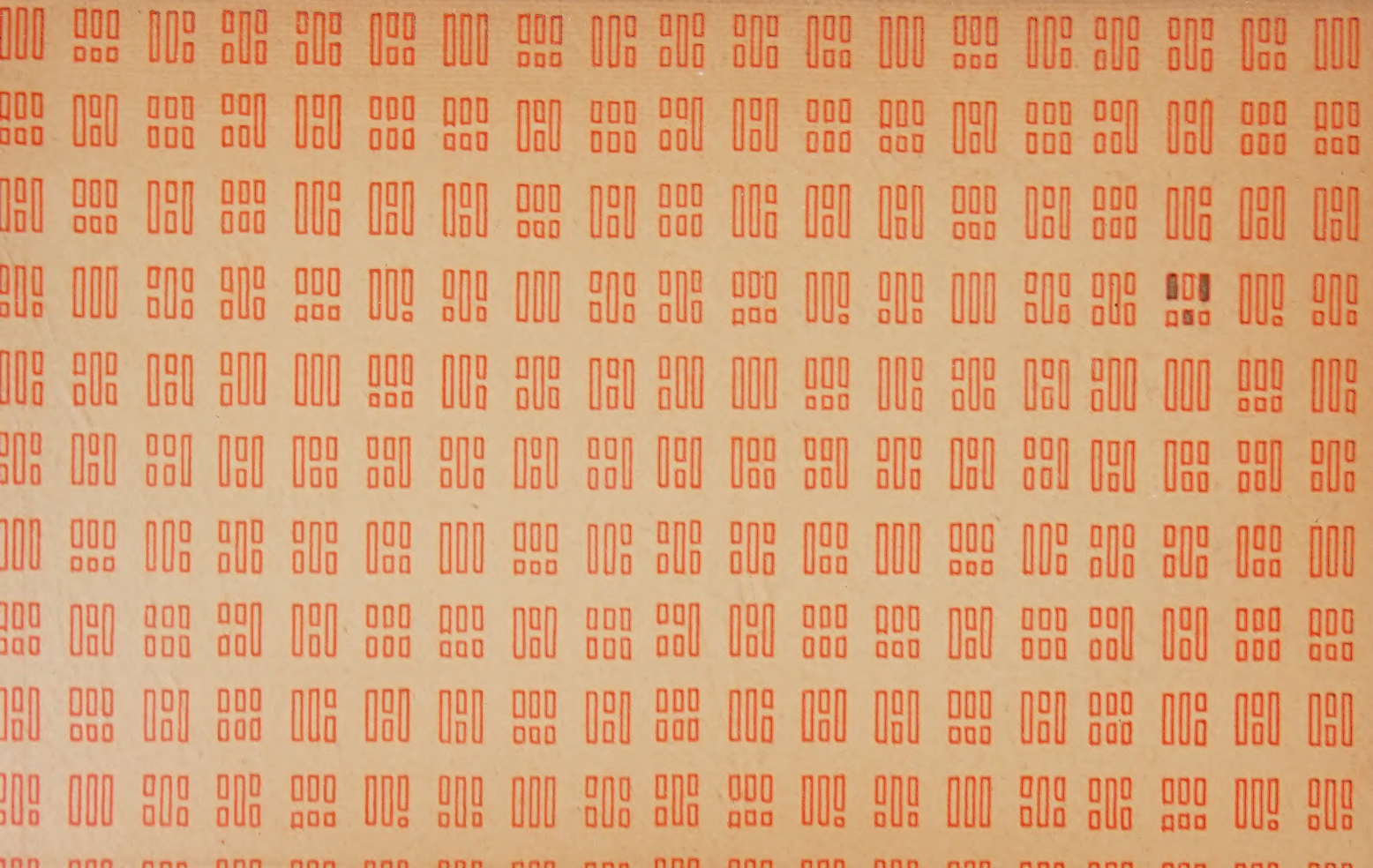
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